

Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



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Contents

Addresses and Remarks

Biotechnology, foundation, and international leaders, meeting—434
California, Aspen Institute in San Jose—443
Democratic Governors' Association dinner—401
Florida
 Democratic National Committee luncheon in West Palm Beach—408
 Departure for West Palm Beach—405
 Reception for Elaine Bloom in Miami—418
Gun control legislation—443
Medicare—405
National Governors' Association
 Dinner—397
 Roundtable discussion—398
1999 NCAA football champion Florida State Seminoles—438
Patients' Bill of Rights legislation—432
Radio address—396
Read Across America Day, radio remarks—427
Shootings
 Theo J. Buell Elementary School in Michigan—412, 422, 435
 Wilkinsburg, PA—422, 435
Tobacco—405
Virginia, UUNET and MCI WorldCom employees in Ashburn—422

Bill Signings

Poison Control Center Enhancement and Awareness Act, statement—393

Communications to Congress

Cuba, letter transmitting report on continuation of national emergency—394
East Timor, letter on further deployment of U.S. forces—394
International agreements, letter transmitting report—428
Iraq, message transmitting report on national emergency—428
Social Security reform legislation, letter—417
2000 Trade Policy Agenda and 1999 Report on the Trade Agreements Program, message transmitting—428

Communications to Federal Agencies

Action by Federal Agencies To Safeguard Against Internet Attacks, memorandum—449
Africa, memorandum on emergency disaster assistance in southern—438
Major Illicit Drug Producing and Drug Transit Countries, memorandum—421

Executive Orders

President's Council on the Future of Princeville, North Carolina—414

(Continued on the inside of the back cover)

Editor's Note: The President was in San Jose, CA, on March 3, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

Published every Monday by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408, the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* contains statements, messages, and other Presidential materials released by the White House during the preceding week.

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Contents—Continued

Interviews With the News Media

- Exchanges with reporters
 - Cabinet Room—434
 - South Lawn—405
 - West Palm Beach, FL—412
- Interviews
 - Dan Rather of the CBS Evening News—439
 - Katie Couric of NBC's Today Show—429

Notices

- Continuation of the National Emergency Relating to Cuba and of the Emergency Authority Relating to the Regulation of the Anchorage and Movement of Vessels—394

Proclamations

- American Red Cross Month—416
- Irish-American Heritage Month—427
- National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month—415
- Women's History Month—415

Statements by the President

- See also* Bill Signings
- Africa, southern flooding—401
- Amtrak funding—400
- E-commerce retail sales, first estimate—437
- Fishing communities, emergency assistance—393
- Hurricane Floyd, additional assistance to communities struck—393
- Mozambique, assistance—427
- President's Council on the Future of Princeville, North Carolina, establishment—413

Supplementary Materials

- Acts approved by the President—451
- Checklist of White House press releases—451
- Digest of other White House announcements—450
- Nominations submitted to the Senate—450

Week Ending Friday, March 3, 2000

**Statement on Assistance to
Communities Struck by
Hurricane Floyd**
February 25, 2000

When Hurricane Floyd hit communities on the eastern seaboard nearly 6 months ago, it left many thousands homeless, destroyed countless businesses, and caused severe loss of crops. While this storm took a terrible toll, hard-hit communities have shown determination and courage as they have made great efforts to rebuild. It is our job to help them, and today I am asking Congress to provide an additional \$347 million to do so.

These funds include essential assistance to farmers who have suffered crop loss, to help to construct low income rural housing, and to provide some 2,000 housing vouchers for families displaced from their homes. I am also asking Congress to fund a feasibility study for the historic Princeville, North Carolina, to best determine options to protect this culturally significant town from future flooding.

We have already made \$2.6 billion available in grants and loans to help the victims of Hurricane Floyd. I urge Congress to approve my request today for additional funding in order to support the efforts of hard-pressed communities as they continue to rebuild and to bring to nearly \$3 billion total funds available to them.

NOTE: A portion of the President's statement was also made available on the White House Press Office Actuality Line. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Statement on Signing the Poison
Control Center Enhancement and
Awareness Act**
February 25, 2000

Today I am pleased to sign a bipartisan bill that will help save lives by giving families

immediate access to vital information about poison control. Each year, more than 2 million poisonings are reported to the Nation's poison control centers, and more than half of the victims are young children. The Poison Control Center Enhancement and Awareness Act authorizes \$140 million over the next 5 years to fund the Nation's poison control centers, carry out a national media campaign, and establish a national toll-free telephone poison control hotline to give callers immediate information if there is an accident in the home. This new funding will help provide vital resources and information to inform the public about poison control and assist parents in protecting the health and safety of their children.

NOTE: S. 632, approved February 25, was assigned Public Law No. 106-174. A portion of the President's statement was also made available on the White House Press Office Actuality Line. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Statement on Emergency Assistance
to Fishing Communities**
February 25, 2000

Due to the decline in important fishing stocks on the west and east coasts, many fishing communities are suffering unexpected losses that seriously threaten their livelihoods. In Long Island Sound, the lobster catch has fallen sharply this year. On the west coast, in Oregon, Washington, and California, there has been a serious decline in groundfish stocks.

The economic threat to fishing communities is severe. I am asking Congress to provide emergency assistance of \$56 million to provide aid to those whose economic welfare is threatened by this crisis and to fund research to identify the causes and potential solutions to these problems to restore the long-term health of our vital fishing industry.

I urge Congress to act quickly to provide relief to communities that are clearly in need.

NOTE: A portion of the President's statement was also made available on the White House Press Office Actuality Line. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Notice—Continuation of the National Emergency Relating to Cuba and of the Emergency Authority Relating to the Regulation of the Anchorage and Movement of Vessels

February 25, 2000

On March 1, 1996, by Proclamation 6867, I declared a national emergency to address the disturbance or threatened disturbance of international relations caused by the February 24, 1996, destruction by the Government of Cuba of two unarmed U.S.-registered civilian aircraft in international airspace north of Cuba. In July 1996 and on subsequent occasions, the Government of Cuba stated its intent to forcefully defend its sovereignty against any U.S.-registered vessels or aircraft that might enter Cuban territorial waters or airspace while involved in a memorial flotilla and peaceful protest. Since these events, the Government of Cuba has not demonstrated that it will refrain from the future use of reckless and excessive force against U.S. vessels or aircraft that may engage in memorial activities or peaceful protest north of Cuba. Therefore, in accordance with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), I am continuing the national emergency with respect to Cuba and the emergency authority relating to the regulation of the anchorage and movement of vessels set out in Proclamation 6867.

This notice shall be published in the *Federal Register* and transmitted to the Congress.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
February 25, 2000.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., February 28, 2000]

NOTE: This notice was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 25, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on February 29. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Notice on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Cuba
February 25, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal Register* for publication, stating that the emergency declared with respect to the Government of Cuba's destruction of two unarmed U.S.-registered civilian aircraft in international airspace north of Cuba on February 24, 1996, is to continue in effect beyond March 1, 2000.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Further Deployment of United States Forces to East Timor
February 25, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

On October 8, 1999, I reported to the Congress, consistent with the War Powers Resolution, the deployment of a limited number of U.S. military forces to East Timor to provide support to the multinational force (INTERFET) peacekeeping mission in East Timor. This force, established by the United

Nations Security Council under Chapter VII of the Charter, was to restore peace and security in East Timor, protect and support the United Nations Mission in East Timor, and, within force capabilities, facilitate humanitarian assistance operations. The U.S. support to the multinational force was limited to planning and staff, communications, intelligence, and logistics.

This multinational force was formally replaced in East Timor on February 23, 2000, by the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). Consequently, the U.S. personnel who were the subject of my October 8 report have redeployed from East Timor. The UNTAET, which was established by Security Council Resolution 1272, has a mandate that includes maintaining law and order throughout East Timor, establishing an effective administration, ensuring the coordination and delivery of humanitarian assistance, and supporting capacity-building for self-government. To implement this plan, the Security Council authorized UNTAET to deploy up to 8,950 military personnel, 200 military observers, and 1,640 civilian police.

The U.S. military contribution to UNTAET is small. The United States has agreed to provide three military observers and one judge advocate; these personnel serve in the United Nations pursuant to the United Nations Participation Act (Public Law 79-264) and will operate under U.N. operational control.

Nonetheless, because the United States has a strong national security interest in promoting regional security and supporting East Timor's transition to independence, the United States will maintain a credible and visible presence in East Timor. The United Nations also supports a continued U.S. presence in East Timor and has indicated that East Timor would benefit greatly from U.S. military deployments to and engagement activities in East Timor. As a result, I have authorized the deployment of a support group (USGET), consisting of approximately 30 U.S. personnel, to facilitate and coordinate U.S. military activities in East Timor. Personnel assigned to USGET will operate under U.S. command and control and rules of engagement. In addition, I have author-

ized a rotational presence of U.S. forces to be achieved through temporary deployments, including periodic ship visits, to East Timor during which U.S. forces will conduct humanitarian and assistance activities throughout East Timor. These rotational presence operations will provide peacetime exercise opportunities for U.S. forces in East Timor, allow for a flexible and visible U.S. force presence independent of UNTAET, and provide humanitarian and civic assistance to East Timor's citizens in critical areas.

The first rotational presence operation, involving the USS BONHOMME RICHARD amphibious group, her embarked helicopters, and the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), commenced in East Timor on February 23, 2000. These forces are operating under U.S. command and control and rules of engagement.

At this point, our rotational presence operations are envisioned to continue through the summer of 2000. It is likely that future rotational presence operations will include rotation of naval assets, embarked aircraft, and small light engineer units. Certain of these forces, including those of the BONHOMME RICHARD, will be equipped with the normal complement of defensive weapons. The duration of our support depends upon the course of events in East Timor. It is, however, our objective to redeploy USGET and reduce rotational presence operations as circumstances permit.

I have taken this action pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution. I appreciate the support of the Congress in this action.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

February 26, 2000

Good morning. Last month, in my State of the Union Address, I called on Congress to help us launch a 21st century revolution in education, guided by our faith that every child can learn. This morning I'm announcing new steps to do just that—to provide tools for States and local communities to turn around their worst performing schools or shut them down.

If our Nation is going to make the most of the promise of the new economy, we must help every American make the most of their God-given potential. But students can't aim high in schools that perform low. Every child deserves a high-quality education.

Over the last 7 years we've followed a commonsense reform strategy: Invest more in our schools and demand more in return. I'm proud that our administration has enacted the largest investments in education in three decades, while, at the same time, working hard for higher standards, greater accountability, and extra help so that all children can meet those high standards.

It's working. Across our Nation, reading and math scores are on the rise. But in spite of this progress, too many schools in our poorest neighborhoods still fail to offer a quality education, and too few of these failing schools ever get enough help to turn around.

That's why I challenged Congress last year to pass my plan to establish a new school accountability fund to help States and local communities to fix failing schools. Together, we enacted a landmark initiative to provide \$134 million to States and school districts this year alone. Today I'm releasing official guidelines to ensure that these funds are invested in what works.

We're taking two unprecedented steps. First, under our plan districts and States will soon receive money dedicated entirely to turning around failing schools. This accountability fund will enable districts to take firm measures, putting in a tougher curriculum, helping teachers get the skills and training they need, and if necessary, closing down a failing school and reopening it under new management or as a public charter school.

Second, my plan also expands public school choice. For the first time ever, we'll require that districts give students in a chronically failing school the option to transfer to a better performing public school.

We know accountability works because that's what the experience of local communities tells us. Two years ago, for example, North Carolina drew up a list of the State's 15 worst performing schools and sent assistance teams to each school. Just a year later, reading and math scores shot up and 14 of those 15 schools improved their performance enough to be taken off the list. I've been to schools all over our country that are achieving in the very same way.

Ultimately, of course, it's up to States and local communities to take the reins and turn around a failing school, but the Federal Government must play a key role by granting more flexibility, demanding more accountability, and investing more in education. With today's action, we're declaring as a nation that we will not fail our children by tolerating failing schools. We must do more.

In our budget for the coming year, I'm doubling the size of the accountability fund to \$250 million and doubling our support for after-school and summer school programs, so that every child in a low performing school has the opportunity to participate. I ask Congress to do its part and make these vital investments.

Again, I also ask Congress to pass my "Education Accountability Act," which will make our schools even more focused on results. We must stay on track to hiring 100,000 high-quality teachers to reduce class size in the early grades. We must fulfill our commitment to build and modernize public schools. And we must invest in efforts to mentor disadvantaged students to help them understand that if they learn what they need to learn, they can all now go on to college.

This entire strategy is rooted in fundamental values: Everyone counts; everyone deserves a chance; everyone has a role to play; and we all do better when we help each other.

Fixing a failing school isn't easy, but communities are proving every day that it can be done. So we must continue to invest more

and demand more. We owe it to our children and to our future.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 3:37 p.m. on February 25 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on February 26. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 25 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks to the National Governors' Association Dinner

February 27, 2000

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, good evening. We will follow our custom tonight, which means that Governor Leavitt and I will give toasts, after which there will be no more duties, and we'll have a good time. [*Laughter*]

I want to welcome Governor and Mrs. Leavitt, Governor and Mrs. Glendening, and all of you to the White House, the 93d meeting of the National Governors' Association. I feel like I've been to most of them. [*Laughter*] Actually, we were thinking tonight, Secretary Governor Riley and Secretary Governor Babbitt, when we leave this year, will have attended 16 of these dinners. And I figure Governor Thompson and Governor Hunt are about that many. But I will have attended 20.

I told Governor Kempthorne tonight that he made a good swap when he left the Senate and became Governor. And I told him I never got tired of being Governor, and I always look forward to your coming here.

Two hundred years ago exactly this year, Thomas Jefferson became the first Governor to be elected President. One of the central principles he carried with him, from the writing of the Declaration of Independence to the statehouse to the White House, is that the role of Government can never be fixed in time or place; it must remain fluid while anchored to firm principles. Jefferson said, "Laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. As new discoveries are made, new truths disclosed, institutions must advance also and keep pace with the times."

Well, today, 200 years later, in the tradition of Thomas Jefferson, our Nation's Governors are keeping pace with the times. This year your theme is "Strengthening American States in the Global Economy." It is truly a new economy. It has changed not only the way people make a living but the way we live and relate to each other and to people all around the world.

For 7 years now, you and I have worked as partners to give the American people the conditions and tools they need to make the most of this new world, with a Federal Government that is smaller, less oriented toward regulation, and more committed than ever to achieving high goals. With your help and hard work, America has made great strides in these last 7 years—cutting crime, cleaning the environment, improving education, moving millions from welfare to work, building the longest prosperity in our Nation's history.

For your role in all these achievements and for the work that you will do with us in this millennial year, I thank you. It has been a great joy and a great honor for me to serve as President and especially to work with the Governors.

I leave you with only this thought. In my lifetime, our country has never had the opportunity we now have to build the future of our dreams for our children. The longest expansion in American history before this one was in the decade of the 1960's. I graduated from high school in 1964. President Kennedy had been killed, the country was heartbroken, but we united behind a new President. We believed at the time that the economy, which was booming, would go on forever; that we would solve our civil rights challenges peacefully, through laws and courts; and that we would prevail in the cold war without particular incident.

Two years later, riots were starting in the streets. And 4 years later, 2 days before I graduated from college, Senator Kennedy was killed. That was 2 months after Martin Luther King had been killed and 9 weeks after President Johnson said he could no longer run for reelection, and our country was divided along partisan and cultural lines in ways that still manifest themselves.

I say that not to be somber but just as a cautionary reminder that it's easy to assume, when things are going well, that it is part of the natural order of things and that it will always be so—without regard to what actions we take, what words we speak, what hopes we harbor in our hearts. In a year, I will be a private citizen; most of you will still be serving. Remember that. We have the chance of a lifetime, and I, for one, have waited 35 years for my country to have that chance. It's a great honor for all of us to serve.

I offer you a toast and the fond hope that you will make the most of it.

Thank you very much.

[At this point, the President offered a toast.]

The President. Governor Leavitt, the podium is yours.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:38 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Michael O. Leavitt of Utah, chairman, and Gov. Parris N. Glendening of Maryland, vice chairman, National Governors' Association, and their wives, Jacalyn and Frances, respectively; and Governors Tommy G. Thompson of Wisconsin, James B. Hunt, Jr., of North Carolina, and Dirk Kempthorne of Idaho. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Governor Leavitt.

Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion With the National Governors' Association

February 28, 2000

The President. Thank you. Good morning, Governor Leavitt, Governor Glendening. It's a great pleasure for me to be here with many members of my Cabinet and my Chief of Staff, John Podesta, and Mickey Ibarra, who does such a good job of working with all of you. Hillary and I especially enjoyed the time we spent at dinner last night, and I hope you did as well.

Over the last 7 years, I've tried to build a genuine partnership with all of you, based on greater resources, greater flexibility, and a greater commitment to shared goals. I think we could all agree that the results have been good: welfare rolls cut in half; 2 million chil-

dren enrolled in the Children's Health Insurance Program; 150,000 young people in AmeriCorps; our schools improving.

This year we'll have a lot to do. Among other things, we have to work hard to make sure that we count every American in the census.

We begin the new century on a high note. In the last 3 months of 1999, economic growth was 6.9 percent, the fastest in more than a decade. This month, expansion has lengthened to the point that we are enjoying the longest economic period of growth we've ever had. Our social fabric, also, is on the mend: the lowest crime level in 25 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest female unemployment rates in 40 years, and the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded.

I believe that in this new economy, Government's role is to give the American people the tools and the conditions they need to make their way and to advance our Nation's progress: fiscal discipline; investments in education and technology; new markets for American products and services.

Today we're going to have a roundtable discussion of three issues vital to our continued success: health care; trade; and the impact of the digital technology on the new economy. We'll also talk about what we've already done and what more we can do to help American families cope with rising home heating oil prices, especially in the Northeast, and the prospect of other oil-related price increases.

On Friday I sent a supplemental appropriations request to Congress to replenish the LIHEAP funds to help more hard-hit families through this crisis and to ensure that there's enough money in the fund for others who may need help later in the year, when the weather gets hot.

Since January, we've allocated \$295 million to help people in need. In addition to making up that shortfall and ensuring there are sufficient funds for the future, we're also requesting \$19 million in additional funds for the Department of Energy's weatherization programs, to help increase energy efficiency of homes and reduce energy costs for families, and we're requesting resources to help

make \$86 million in SBA loans available to small home heating oil distributors, so that they will be able to extend the kind of flexible payment terms to customers hard hit by the recent price spike that so many utilities do today.

I urge Governors who are receiving these LIHEAP funds to adjust eligibility standards also to cover as many low and moderate income families as possible and to keep in mind that States can use temporary assistance for needy family funds to provide emergency heating assistance to very low income families with children.

We've also directed the Coast Guard to expedite deliveries of home heating oil. And as I think all of you know, Secretary Richardson is conducting a 60-day study of diversifying energy supplies and possibly converting factories and other major oil users to other fuels to free up oil supplies for home heating use. And, in anticipation of other potential price spikes in other parts of the oil market, we are asking refiners to keep producing at full throttle until the crisis has passed.

Finally, I hope that we will begin a discussion about how to make our economy even more energy efficient, so we're not so dependent on the ups and downs of supplies or so affected by future oil prices.

Whether in response to an earthquake, a flood, a hurricane, a farm crisis, our people always pull together at times like this; and for those of you like me, who come from different parts of the country, I can tell you that the families in the Northeast need our help now, and we're going to do what we can to provide it.

Before we begin our roundtable discussion, let me just say a few words about the other issues that are important to every Governor in this room and every citizen in our Nation: education reform, the current debate over how best to provide a Medicare prescription drug option for our seniors, and environmental stewardship.

Over the past 7 years, as we have turned the deficits into surplus and now are on our way to being debt-free in 13 years. We have also nearly doubled our investment in schools and demanded more in return, working hard, along with you, for higher standards, greater

accountability, and extra help to the children who need it. Virtually every State has embraced that approach. Last year, with your help, we enacted landmark school accountability legislation to provide \$134 million to States and school districts to turn around failing schools. Last week I announced new guidelines to help States invest in what works to do just that.

I want to thank you for your partnership in the accountability movement and ask you to continue to work with us to strengthen our focus on that.

Another issue of increasing importance to States is the growing challenge presented by the lack of prescription drug coverage for seniors. Many people don't know that States, through their Medicaid programs, are the single largest purchasers of drugs in the world. Increasing drug costs are likely to be one of the fastest growing components of Medicaid programs in the years to come. We all recognize, I believe, that we need to modernize and reform the Medicare program, to extend its life, to make it more efficient and more competitive and better able to meet the challenges of the baby boom generation's aging.

I hope, as part of this broader reform, we can work with you to develop a privately contracted, voluntary Medicare prescription drug benefit. It's a life and death issue for many seniors, and I don't think we should let another year pass without taking action. Tomorrow I will release a State-by-State analysis of the health, financing, and demographic challenges facing the Medicare program and the tens of millions of Americans it serves.

Finally, let me also say that this is a good year to secure permanent funding for the protection of precious lands across our Nation. I had a good discussion with Governor King about this last night. Last year Congress approved a substantial increase in our lands legacy initiative. Two weeks ago, as part of this effort, I announced \$60 million in grants to States to create parks, save open space, and protect forests. The new budget proposes another substantial increase, a record \$1.4 billion to protect land and coastal resources, and this year we've proposed to make the higher level permanent funding. At

least half of this funding would go to support State and local conservation efforts. I hope we can make this, too, our gift to the future.

Now, I'd like to call on Governor Leavitt to make some opening remarks, and I want to thank you again, sir, for what you said last night. It was terrific. Welcome.

[At this point, the roundtable discussion began.]

The President. I would just like to make one comment—and then I know Governor Leavitt has got an agenda—about the role of government in the new economy. All of you will be thinking about this. I think we need to think about how we can reasonably make more new markets or help to facilitate them; how we can remove barriers without undermining public interest to the private sector's development; and how we can make government more user-friendly. And I'll just give you a couple of examples.

One of the biggest fights we had here when we overhauled the telecommunications law, for the first time in 60 years, was the insistence, that we in the administration had, that we let as many entrepreneurs into this unfolding new business as possible. And now, everywhere I go, I see people who are doing terrifically well; have hired huge numbers of people, who didn't even have businesses 5 years ago, because we got Federal legislation that had an entrepreneurial focus. And I think all of us should be sensitive to that, because I know Tom Friedman talked to you the other day; he's one of many people who points out that, even though more of our growth than ever before is in private sector jobs, the role of government, while different, is still profoundly important. And if you make the wrong call on some of these things, you wind up paying for it for a long time to come.

We just had a financial—totally bipartisan financial modernization act pass the Congress last year that, I believe, is an example of removing impediments without undermining the public interest. We enacted the Community Reinvestment Act, but I think that we took a set of barriers out of the way of our financial institutions in maximizing the digital economy.

And then we've also tried to make Government more user-friendly. We have more and

more people filing their taxes electronically and relating to us in a lot of other ways. And I saw an article in my weekly reports just last night that at least one of you has already cleared the way for people to vote electronically, which will be an interesting challenge. If somebody wants to explain to me how we can do that and meet all the security needs, I'd be interested in it. Because I think, clearly, we're all going this way. I know many of you have advance voting. And interestingly enough, it's just to make government more user-friendly, and it's changing politics.

There's one State here where a congressional race was decided in the last election because of advance voting, and there was a totally different result on election day than in the advance voting period. But we all are going to have to be very creative.

The other thing I think we have to do is not shut ourselves out of any part of the world, and I want to talk to you more later about the importance of bringing China into the WTO, which I feel very strongly about, and I hope we'll have a chance to talk about that.

Thank you very much. We'll let the press leave, and we'll go on with the program.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:40 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Michael O. Leavitt of Utah, chairman, and Gov. Parris N. Glendening of Maryland, vice chairman, National Governors' Association; Gov. Angus S. King, Jr., of Maine; and Thomas Friedman, foreign affairs columnist, New York Times. The President also referred to LIHEAP, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

Statement on Funding for Amtrak *February 28, 2000*

There has never been a better time to expand our investment in Amtrak and the Nation's passenger railways. The number of Americans relying on Amtrak has continued to grow for 3 years in a row. And through sound financial management, Amtrak continues its movement toward viability.

Therefore, this year I am asking Congress to increase Amtrak funding by more than \$400 million, or more than 70 percent, in order to make investments to expand Amtrak

routes and provide even more efficient service, laying the foundation for high-speed rail. With this major funding increase this year, we can help ensure a thriving passenger rail system for many years to come.

NOTE: A portion of the President's statement was also made available on the White House Press Office Actuality Line.

Statement on Floods in Southern Africa

February 28, 2000

I am deeply saddened by the devastation caused by flooding in southern Africa, which has worsened over the past few days. Almost a million people in Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe have lost their homes or their livelihoods, and tens of thousands of people in Mozambique are stranded in flooded areas and require urgent rescue.

Today we are allocating \$1 million, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, to support aircraft for critical search and rescue operations and the delivery of relief supplies. In addition, we have already provided over \$1.8 million to fund air transport, prevent disease, deliver supplies, and support relief efforts. Two aircraft from the Department of Defense are on the way to deliver shelter materials, blankets, and other relief supplies. Also, we are dispatching a disaster assistance response team to the region to determine other ways that we can help our friends in southern Africa.

The thoughts and prayers of the American people are with the people of the region as they cope with this disaster.

Remarks to the Democratic Governors' Association Dinner

February 28, 2000

Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for the warm welcome. Thank you for this wonderful book. Governor Patton, Mrs. Patton, Governor Davis, Governor O'Bannon; to B.J. Thornberry, and all the officers of the DGA; and especially my great friend Mark Weiner. I want to acknowledge also the presence—Mark Weiner did

a good job tonight, and all the rest of you did, raising this money. I thank you for that.

I want to acknowledge the presence in this audience of the man who was the executive director of the DGA when I was a member, my good friend Chuck Dolan. I thank you for being here and for all you did for us. And all my colleagues—I know there are five or six Governors out there who are former Governors with whom I served—thank you for being here.

I want to acknowledge the Governors who are retiring. Governor Rossello, thank you for everything you've done. And Governor Carper and Governor Carnahan are going to be Members of the United States Senate, and that will be a good thing for the Senate, a bad thing for the Governors.

I want to say a special work of thanks to the man who nominated me to be vice chairman of the DGA in 1979, Governor Jim Hunt, one of the finest people I ever met in my life. Thank you, Jim Hunt, for what you did.

You know, I will treasure this book. I have a first edition of "Profiles in Courage," but not one signed by John Kennedy. Hillary says that the reason I admire John Kennedy so much is he's the only person to ever serve as President whose handwriting was even harder to read than mine. [Laughter] But I can recognize the signature, and I thank you.

President Kennedy once said, "The party which, in its drive for unity, discipline, and success, ever decides to exclude new ideas, independent conduct, or insurgent members is in danger." Well, thanks to the Democratic Governors, to your new ideas, your independent conduct, and your willingness always to try to do better and to be different, the Democratic Party is in no danger. We're stronger tonight than we have been in many, many years, thanks to you.

As President, I have been deeply indebted to my service as Governor. It has stood me in good stead. And I have been deeply indebted to so many of you for the friendship, the advice, the counsel you have given me, and to so many who were members of this organization with me who continue all during these years to call with a helpful word or sometimes just a word of friendship and support.

Thanks to our partnership and the hard work of the American people, our country is in good shape at the dawn of the new millennium. We have 21 million new jobs, the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest crime rates in 25 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest Hispanic- and African-American unemployment rate ever, and the longest economic expansion in history. We are well-positioned for this new century.

And I am very proud that there is in this country, embodied in the service of the Democratic Governors, a new Democratic Party, committed to new ideas and the old principles of opportunity for all, responsibility from all, and a community of all Americans. I am proud of what we have done together.

But you came here tonight because we're raising money for the elections of 2000. And as dearly as I loved every single word Paul Patton said, and I'll treasure it for a lifetime, and he'll never be able to get away from it because, everywhere I go, the White House Communications Agency captures things on film—I've got a movie, a color movie of Paul Patton, and the next time he gets mad at me, I'm going to play it for him. *[Laughter]* I will treasure everything he said for a lifetime. As much as I treasure and as much as I have loved being President, elections are about the future. And in this election season, those of you who are running and those of you who are serving and not running must be very active in defining the choices for the future.

Last night at the dinner at the White House, I reminded all the Governors that we are now in the longest economic expansion in history, and it's easy to feel comfortable and confident, maybe even a little complacent. But the last time we had the longest economic expansion in history was in the decade of the 1960's, between 1961 and 1969.

In 1964, when I graduated from high school, America was still profoundly sad about the loss of President Kennedy, but very optimistic and very united behind President Johnson; absolutely convinced we'd just have high economic growth with low inflation from now on; absolutely convinced that we

would solve the civil rights challenges of our age through the Congress; absolutely convinced that we would prevail in the cold war as a united nation.

Within 2 years, we had riots in the streets, and the country was divided. Within 4 years, Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy had been killed, Lyndon Johnson said he wouldn't run for reelection. The country was split right in two. We had a Presidential election which for the first time in a long time was about the politics of division. You remember the election of 1968? Vote with the Silent Majority. And it was us and them. If you weren't in the Silent Majority, presumably, you were in the loud minority. I know; I was one of them.

And in just a few months, we lost the longest economic expansion in history. And we've had decades of us and them elections and us and them politics in Washington, DC. I ran for President because when I was a Governor, I could not have survived practicing politics the way it was done here very day, and I was sick and tired of people all caught up in the Washington political game, deaf to the voices of the people like those in Appalachia that Paul Patton introduced me to.

On that hot day in Hazard, Kentucky, which I'll never forget because it was so hot, I saw people like the people I grew up with. They don't want much from us. They get up every day and go to work, and they obey the law, and they pay their taxes. All they want us to do is to work as hard at our job as they work at theirs and to pay attention to what their concerns are and to think about how their children are going to do better.

And I came to Washington determined to do that. I am profoundly indebted to every Governor who served with me, who helped me, and to all of you since. But what I want you to remember is elections are about the future and so is governance. And don't you dare be complacent about this. I have waited for 35 years for my country to be in shape again to build the future of our dreams for our children. Our party can lead the country to do that. We're going in the right direction. We have the right ideas. We have the right values. And you have to lead to make sure it happens.

And you have to be willing to do things that may not grab the headlines all the time. We have to take what Theodore Roosevelt said at the dawn of the century: "A growing country with a young spirit should always take the long look ahead." Today some of you came in to see me, including Governor Carper and former Governor Dukakis who is here tonight, to talk about my Amtrak budget. Well, that's not a headline grabber, but it's important to the future that America have a high-speed rail system that guarantees our energy security and our safety and our strength. It's part of our long look ahead.

It's part of our long look ahead that we recognize that we've got the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years. That is the good news. The challenge is that nearly every family in nearly every income group is having some difficulty balancing the burdens of raising their children and succeeding at work, and whenever this country has to make a choice—any family—we lose.

And we have to do more to help people to succeed at home and at work. We have to do more to bring economic opportunity to the people and places that have been left behind. If we can't bring free enterprise to Appalachia, to the Mississippi Delta, to the inner cities, and to the Indian reservations of this country now, we'll never get around to it. And the Democrats ought to lead the way. Everybody deserves a chance to work who is willing to do so.

Jim Hunt said something today I want to emphasize. We started out together in 1979, and we all wanted—especially in the South, where we knew we had to do it—we all wanted to make education better. But we really didn't know how to do it, especially with all the kids from all the different backgrounds, the different economic and racial and religious and ethnic backgrounds, with all their different burdens that they carried from home to school.

But we don't have an excuse anymore. Now, we know what works. We know how to turn around failing schools. We know all our kids can learn. And we know how to invest in it. We know how to demand high standards. We know what to do. We in the Democratic Party have to lead America to excellence in education for every single child

in this country, across all the lines that divide us.

When I became President, there were a lot of people that never thought the crime rate would go down again. But we know how to do it. We know you've got to put more police on the street, people who are trusted by folks in a community, who work with them, who know how to prevent crime as well as catch criminals. And we know—even in the South, we know—we've got to do more to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and away from children. We know what works. The Democratic Party ought to lead the country to making this the safest big country in the world. We owe that to our children.

We know that, in the digital economy the Governors came here to talk about, you do not have to weaken the environment to improve the economy. In fact, we know that we can improve the environment and the economy at the same time. There is a \$1 trillion market in the world today for environmental technologies that avoid the worst consequences of global warming and clean up local air and water systems and preserve the land—\$1 trillion market. We know that. And a lot of our friends in the other party don't know that yet. The Democratic Party ought to lead the way to a 21st century economy that proves we can have the strongest economy in history and the cleanest environment in history. We ought to lead the way to that sort of future.

And we know, even those of you that come, as I do, from a landlocked State in the middle of the country, that there is no more artificial dividing line between foreign policy and domestic policy. We know that our welfare is tied to the welfare of people all around the world. That's why I've worked so hard for peace in every region of the world and why I've worked to expand trade and why I believe we ought to take advantage of an agreement that finally opens China's markets to us, the way our markets have been open to China for decades now; why I believe we ought to continue to work to rid the world of weapons of mass destruction, chemical and biological terrorism; why we ought to adopt the test ban treaty—even though the Senate voted against it last year—because we

have got to make a safer world if we want our kids to live on safer streets and have a safer future in every State in the United States of America.

And, finally—you know, I get apprehensive when people start giving me gifts, even one like this that I treasure. That's the kind of thing that they ought to do for you when you're not around anymore. I have to pinch myself; I'm still alive, I'm still here. [*Laughter*] I hope to be a useful citizen when I'm no longer living in the White House. But if the good Lord came to me tonight and said, "I'm sorry, you can't finish your term. You're out of here tomorrow morning. And I'll only give you one wish. I'm not a genie; you get one wish, not three," I would set aside everything I just said to you and pray that America could find a way to overcome the profoundly ingrained tendency of people everywhere to distrust people who are different from them by race, by religion, people who were gay, all these things that are different.

Why? You've been here talking about the Internet economy. I've got a cousin in Arkansas who plays chess once a week with a guy in Australia over the Internet. People are being drawn together as never before. I was in poor villages in Africa where the school buildings had maps that still had the Soviet Union on it. But because they're getting computer hookups, pretty soon they'll just be able to print out maps that are new, and those poor little kids in those little villages will be able to learn the same geography our kids do in our finest schools.

We are being drawn together as never before, and yet we are bedeviled by the oldest problems of humankind. Sunday I'm going to Selma to be with Governor Siegelman and the veterans of the Selma march 35 years ago. For me, particularly because I'm from the South, it is a signal honor. And we will celebrate all the great things that have happened in the last 35 years to bring us together.

I see Governor Barnes out there from Georgia. He went in on a great vote that carried in two African-Americans to statewide elected office in Georgia, and there are things like that happening all over America. Governor Locke out there—the first Chinese-American Governor our country ever

had. Governor Cayetano from Hawaii—a Philippine-American. But it is still true that even in America—we had kids at a Jewish community center in California, little kids shot at just because they were Jewish. A Filipino postal worker killed just because he was Asian and worked for the Federal Government. All those fine people killed in the middle of the country by that man who said he belonged to a church that didn't believe in God but did believe in white supremacy. Matthew Shepard stretched out on a rack in Wyoming.

Now, most of the news in America is good. But I am telling you, we're a smart people. You can't keep us down no matter what, as long as we've got our heads on straight. But the Democratic Party ought to take the lead in reminding us that one of the things that we have learned as we've unlocked the mysteries of the human gene is that we are genetically 99.9 percent the same and that the differences among individuals within racial groups are different—are greater than the differences from group to group.

Whether we like it or not, we're all in this boat together. And those of you who have been in the Oval Office know that I keep on the table there a moon rock that Neil Armstrong gave me on the 30th anniversary of the landing on the Moon. It's a lava rock that is 3.6 billion years old. And whenever anybody gets all hot and lathered up in the Oval Office in a meeting and they act like the whole world is about to come down, I say, "Time out. See that rock? It's 3.6 billion years old. Now, we're all just passing through. Chill out." [*Laughter*]

But even though we're all just passing through, every minute, every hour, every day is precious. So I ask you all, apart from everything you do on all these issues I mentioned, model that, model one America. Remind people that if you believe everybody counts and everybody ought to have a chance, then you've got to believe we're all better off when we help each other instead of looking down on one another.

That's another thing the Democratic Party has stood for. We lost a lot of Presidential elections because we stood for it, but we're coming back now because we stand for it. You've got 13 seats up in 2000 and 36 up

in 2002. I'm going to help you with the 13, and when I'm just a citizen, I'll help you with the 36 if you want me to. But we will never have a national Democratic Party that's as strong as it ought to be until we have a majority of the governorships again, and until we can prove, where people live, that we care about them, that we can produce for them, that we reflect their fondest hopes and deepest values. You can do that.

You have helped me to help America. You have immeasurably enriched my life. You've been good to me and Hillary and Al and Tipper. And for all that, I am profoundly grateful. I will treasure this book for the rest of my days and my friendships and, seriously, what Paul Patton said. But America is always about tomorrow. So be proud of what we've done, but keep your eye on tomorrow and lead the American people where we ought to go.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:17 p.m. at Union Station. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Paul E. Patton of Kentucky, chair, Gov. Gray Davis of California, vice chair, B.J. Thornberry, executive director, and Mark Weiner, treasurer, Democratic Governors' Association; Governor Patton's wife, Judi; Governors Frank O'Bannon of Indiana, Pedro Rossello of Puerto Rico, Thomas R. Carper of Delaware, Mel Carnahan of Missouri, James B. Hunt, Jr., of North Carolina, Don Siegelman of Alabama, Roy Barnes of Georgia, Gary Locke of Washington, and Benjamin J. Cayetano of Hawaii; former Governor Michael Dukakis of Massachusetts; and astronaut Neil Armstrong.

Remarks on Departure for West Palm Beach, Florida, and an Exchange With Reporters

February 29, 2000

Medicare and Tobacco

The President. Good morning. I would like to say just a couple of words about two subjects vital to the health of the American people: Medicare and tobacco.

Throughout the life of this administration Vice President Gore and I have done everything we could to protect our children from the dangers of tobacco. Five years ago, we put forward a landmark rule affirming the

FDA's authority to regulate tobacco products.

Since that time, the tobacco industry has fought our efforts at every turn. I am heartened today by news reports that the Nation's leading cigarette maker is now willing to accept Government regulation of tobacco.

If Philip Morris is ready to support the FDA provisions of the tobacco bill the industry and the Congressional leadership killed just 2 years ago, that is an important step forward.

Every day, 3,000 young people smoke for the first time, and 1,000 of them will die earlier as a result. We have a duty to do everything we can to save and lengthen their lives by protecting our young people from the dangers of tobacco.

I also want to comment briefly about an important new report I am releasing today on the future of Medicare. I am pleased to be joined here today by some of the Nation's foremost leaders on behalf of our senior citizens, along with a number of seniors who know from their personal experiences what Medicare means to their lives.

In the 34 years since it was created, Medicare has eased the suffering and extended the lives of tens of millions of Americans. It has given young families peace of mind knowing they will not have to mortgage their children's future to pay for their parents' health care.

If we want our children to have the same peace of mind when our generation retires, we must act now to strengthen Medicare. When I became President, the Medicare Trust Fund was scheduled to go broke last year, 1999. Because of the tough actions we have taken, the life of the Trust Fund has been extended by 16 years.

Still, we must do more. The Trust Fund is projected to go broke now by 2015, and the new report I am issuing shows why. Not only will the senior population nearly double over the next 25 years, but already today, in 40 of our 50 States, 1 in 10 Medicare beneficiaries is 85 years of age or older. This is the fastest growing group of seniors, and they require the greatest amount of care. And they will spend—consider this—almost a

quarter of their lives on Medicare. The report also shows that in every State in America, there are more women on Medicare than men; on average 57 percent women, 43 percent men.

This report is the most compelling evidence to date that we must strengthen and modernize Medicare for the long run, including adding a voluntary prescription drug benefit. With our economy strong, our budget balanced, our people confident, now is the time to deal with this important issue. The budget I propose does just that while maintaining our surplus and paying down our debt over the next 13 years to make us debt-free for the first time since 1835. It uses the savings from debt reduction to lengthen the life of Social Security and Medicare. It uses competition and the best private sector practices to control costs and improve quality in Medicare. And it provides funds to give every older American, at long last, a choice of affordable coverage for prescription drugs.

These drugs are an indispensable part of modern medicine. No one creating a Medicare program today would think of creating a program without prescription drug coverage. Yet more than three in five Medicare recipients now lack dependable drug coverage which can lengthen and enrich their lives. It's even worse for seniors in rural areas, who have little or no option to purchase private prescription drug coverage. And as today's report shows, nearly a quarter of our Nation's elderly live in rural areas.

Our budget would extend seniors the life-line of optional prescription drug coverage. It creates a reserve fund of \$35 billion to build on this new benefit, and protect those who carry the heavy burden of catastrophic drug costs.

I have been gratified to see the growing bipartisan support for adding prescription drugs to Medicare since I first proposed it last year. But I am concerned, frankly, about two things.

First, some in the congressional majority have talked about providing drug coverage only to the very poorest of our seniors. This report shows that doing so would mean denying a prescription drug option to the nearly half of all seniors who have modest, middle incomes between \$15,000 and \$50,000—the

majority of whom lack dependable drug coverage as well. I think it would be wrong to deny them the opportunity to get that drug coverage.

Second, the majority party in Congress has begun talking again about spending the surplus on huge, risky tax cuts which would make it impossible to pay down our debt. That would leave nothing for extending the life of Social Security and Medicare, nothing for a voluntary drug benefit. I believe that when they read this report they will understand what the consequences of such a decision would be.

The American people have worked hard to turn our economy around and turn our deficits into surpluses. Now, we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to both pay down the national debt and to reform Medicare, lengthen the life of Social Security, and add a voluntary prescription drug benefit to the Medicare program. We owe it to the American people to seize this opportunity this year. And I thank all of these fine people who are with me for the contributions they are making to that effort. Thank you.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Are you throwing in the towel on the Middle East negotiations, and why have you never condemned the bombing of the power plants for civilians in Lebanon?

The President. First of all, I am not throwing in the towel. And Mr. Ross is coming home to consult with me to see where we are. We've made some important headway. We've still got some stumbling blocks there. We're working harder than ever. I'm doing what I think is most likely to succeed this year in securing dramatic advances with the Palestinians and with Syria and with Lebanon. And I'm doing the best I can on it, just as I have been for 7 years.

But it would be a great mistake to overread the significance of his coming home. He's coming home because we need to talk about where we are now and where we're going. But there is no throwing in the towel here.

China

Q. Is the China WTO vote starting to slip away from you? And what are you going to say to the Chinese to get them to stop undermining your message?

The President. Well, no, I don't think it's slipping away. I think the White Paper contains some fairly inflammatory language which caused me, once again, to say that we have had the same policy for 20 years now. We believe in one China, but it has to be resolved peacefully. And we are adamantly opposed to any sort of force.

The White Paper also contains some specific suggestions, however, about how a dialog might be opened. And I understand that this is the political season over there as well. They're having a Presidential election in Taiwan. And I have noticed not only in this election in America but in previous ones, sometimes things are said in political seasons that might not be said at other times. I'm sure you've noticed that as well.

I don't mean to trivialize this. It is very important that everyone understand how strongly the United States views our long-standing policy. We accept one China. We believe there must be cross-strait dialog, and we believe there must be no violence of any kind. But I do not sense that this vote is slipping away.

Oil Prices

Q. Americans today are paying \$1.42 a gallon for gas. That's a pretty good hit at the pump every day when they fill up their tanks. Is there anything that your administration can do to solve that problem, and specifically, is the release of oil from the strategic oil reserves still on the table?

The President. The answer to the second question is yes. We're looking at this oil swap issue. But I think that—as you know, there have been lots of press reports about the prospect that production will be increased and if it is, then the oil prices will go down and the gasoline prices will go down. And that's really what is needed here. And we'll see—I'm encouraged that that might occur. So that's the main thing we can do. But no, I have not taken the petroleum reserve issue off the table. And I certainly wouldn't do that

in the event that we don't seem to have any other options.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, if I could follow up on the Middle East question for a moment. You have a little more than 10 months left in your Presidency, are you prepared to turn this process over? And will you take steps to turn this process over to whoever your successor is?

The President. Well, if we haven't gotten it done I will. But keep in mind, the Israelis and the others—the Palestinians have committed to resolve their issues by the middle of September. That's their common commitment. And neither one of them have given up on that deadline.

And secondly, I think that on the Syrian track, given how hard it was to get it started, and how close, I believe, they are on the substance of it—I don't think there is as much difference there as is commonly assumed—I think it is more likely that we'll have success, if we have it this year, than if we put it off.

But they're not operating on my timetable. They're operating on theirs. And I'm doing what I can to help to get them get the job done as quickly as possible.

Austria

Q. Mr. President, does Haider's resignation really make a difference while the Freedom Party is still in the Austrian Government, and should the international community normalize relations with Austria now?

The President. Well, I think the answer to your question is: I don't know if it makes a difference or not. It might, it might not. The EU has put out a very cautionary statement this morning, and obviously they're closer to it than we are. I think the important thing is that the party reject the kind of intolerance that we fear has been a part of it.

And I think the EU statement is a pretty good capturing of how we all feel right now.

Expulsion of Cuban Diplomat

Q. The Cuban Government continues to insist that the diplomat that was expelled on Saturday had committed no illegal acts. What is your—

The President. Well, my belief is that that matter was handled in the appropriate way, in the way that countries always handle such matters with diplomats. There is no difference in the way we've handled that than the way we've handled many other cases, not just in my administration, but long before. And I don't think I should say more about it than that.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:46 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East Dennis B. Ross; Austria's Freedom Party leader Joerg Haider, who resigned on Feb. 28; and Cuban diplomat Jose Imperatori.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon in West Palm Beach, Florida

February 29, 2000

Thank you very much. First of all, Bren, thank you for your wonderful remarks and for opening your home to us today, giving those of us who suffered through an unusually long, cold Washington winter a chance to gaze out on the Atlantic under different circumstances, and for always being there for us.

I also want to thank you for what you have done for the most important U.S. Senate candidate in the country to me. Hillary had a wonderful time here, and I thank you and the rest of you who helped her. I thank you for that.

I'd like to join with Joe Andrew in expressing my appreciation to all the other officers of the Democratic Party and the Florida officials that are here. Congressman Peter Deutsch and Lori flew down with me today. We had a good time, and I was glad to be able to ferry them back home, for a few hours anyway.

I'd like to thank Danny Abraham, Cynthia Friedman, the Carters, all the others who have done this fine work today, and I'd like to put in a special plug for my longtime friend Representative Elaine Bloom who is running for Congress here. She was for me in December of 1991, when only my mother thought I could be elected President.

[*Laughter*] And I am for her in 2000. I'm going to do what I can to help. But I thank you for running for Congress. Thank you.

Let me just say a few words today about this millennial election and about why we're where we are. Eight years ago, when I ran for President, I did so because I thought Washington had become a place that was almost turned in on itself, obsessed with itself, and stuck in the thinking and the debate of a time that was long gone. It was obvious then that we were moving into a global economy, into a global society, that the whole way we work, the way we earn a living, the way we relate to each other and the rest of the world was undergoing a profound change. And yet, in Washington, we just kept repeating over and over and over again the same debates. Each party took the same sides, staked out the same opposite position, paralysis occurred, and the results were not particularly satisfying to the American people.

And so I decided that I would ask the American people to give me a chance to try a different approach, to try to have a politics that would unite and not divide, to try to have a budget policy that would restore basic arithmetic to the American budget and to stop pretending that we could ever get rid of high interest rates and low investment and slow growth until we got rid of the Government deficit, to put the American people first in profound ways so that it would no longer be about Washington but about how people lived out here.

And we've been working at it pretty steady now for 7 years and a month, and the results have been good. We have the longest expansion in history and the lowest unemployment rate and welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, lowest crime rates in 25 years. Adoptions are up. Ninety percent of our kids are immunized for the first time. The college going rate's increased a lot. We've got 150,000 young Americans who are doing community service through the AmeriCorps program, a thousand colleges with their kids out, going into grade schools every week to teach people to read. The country is coming together and moving forward. And that is the good news.

But I think the most interesting thing about this election is, in my judgment, that

the winner will be determined by what the election is about—in the President's race, in the Congress races, in the Governors' races. And you have to help decide what the election is about. And there's more latitude now because things seem to be going well, so we're under the illusion that there is more latitude to decide what the election is about.

I always tell people the Presidential election is the world's greatest job interview, except that the job interview, unlike most jobs, this job interview has two components. First of all, people have got to be able to look at you and size up, "Can I imagine this person having this job?" And then they have to decide what the job is about, and they are two different things. If you don't pass the first test, you don't get to take the second one.

Now, I think all four of the candidates that are left passed the first test. The American people can look at them and imagine them being President. But the winner will be determined by what is the job about, what is the election about, what is the charter, what do you want, what are we to do with this enormous amount of prosperity, this historic moment where we can make peace?

Very often, democracies mishandle good times, because people are under the illusion that it's just sort of an automatic, and it goes on forever. And when I gave the State of the Union Address, I asked the American people to work with me this year and the Congress to try to overcome the partisan divides and to take a long look ahead at the big challenges facing America. I asked them to pay the debt off, get America out of debt for the first time since 1835. I asked them to deal with the aging of America. We're going to double the number of people over 65 in the next 30 years.

I released a Medicare report today that said the fastest growing group of seniors are people over 85. They will spend almost a quarter of their lives on Medicare. And since 70 percent of our seniors don't have access to affordable quality medicine, I'd like to see them get it under the Medicare program. But we also have to change the program so it will last longer.

We have to lengthen the life of Social Security. I persuaded this Congress to save the Social Security surplus—that is the surplus

that we get because you pay more in Social Security taxes than we pay out now—but I haven't persuaded them to do anything with it. So the good news is we're paying down the debt. But the bad news is we haven't saved Social Security yet. Because if they would just take the interest savings we get from a lower debt and put it into the Social Security Trust Fund, we could run it out to 2050, which would take it beyond the life expectancy of all but the most fortunate baby boomers. We have to deal with this.

We've got to face the fact that we have the largest and most diverse student population in our history, and we no longer have an excuse for not making our schools excellent. We now know how to do it. We were talking the other night with the Governors, who just left town, in Washington; and there were a couple of people, one in my Cabinet, the Secretary of Education, and one retiring Governor, the Governor of North Carolina, who has the best school improvement record in America. And we were laughing about what it was like when we started as young men together 22 years ago as Governors. Everybody wanted to make the schools better, but we didn't really know how. Now we know. We have mountains and mountains of evidence of what works. And the National Government should play a role in that. There's nothing more important than giving all our kids a good education. Is that going to be a part of this election, or not?

We've got the crime rate down 7 years in a row. It's the lowest it's been in 25 years. But nobody seriously believes this country is as safe as it ought to be. We can make America the safest big country in the world. Columbine happened a year ago, and I'm still waiting for Congress to close the gun show loophole, to stop the importation of these large capacity ammunition clips, and to require child safety locks on guns.

Today in Michigan, in a school, a 6-year-old boy with a gun that his brother gave him, shot a 6-year-old girl. And she died. The child was 6 years old. How did that child get that gun? Why could the child fire the gun? If we had the technology today to put in these child safety locks, why don't we do it? I don't know what the facts were in this

case, and I don't want to prejudge it or condemn anyone. But I know this: I know that the accidental gun death rate of children—the accidental gun death rate of children in America is 9 times higher than that in the other 25 biggest countries combined—combined. So we know what to do. We just don't have any excuses. Is that going to be a subject of this election, or not?

You have to decide that. And the same is true with health care. The same is true with the environment and whether we can grow the environment and improve the economy. The same is true with our obligations around the world. How do we define America's responsibility to fight biological and chemical and nuclear warfare, to fight terrorism, to advance the cause of peace, to fight against the racial and ethnic and tribal turmoil around the world, to advance the cause of peace through expanding trade?

I strongly believe—and our party's divided about it, I know—but I strongly believe we ought to let China in the World Trade Organization. Everything I've learned as President and everything I've learned in 53 years of living is that you get a lot more from people if you give them a chance to work with you than you do if you tell them you don't want to fool with them any more.

And we've got a big stake in how China turns out. I don't know how they will and neither does anybody else, but I know this: If we put them in this trade organization, they'll have to open their markets to us just like our markets are open to them. So it's a no-brainer economically.

But politically, it's important, because they will have an incentive to make good choices in the future about their role in the world. If we keep them out, they'll still keep selling stuff here, they'll relate more closely to others, and they'll have no incentives to be responsible partners in the world. If we do this, 20 years from now we'll wonder why we ever debated it. If we don't do it, 20 years from now we'll be still kicking ourselves. That's what I believe. So I'm going to fight for it.

But these things ought to be the subject of this election, because you know the world will grow smaller, not larger. We have the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, much lower than anybody thought we could have

without exploding inflation. But there are still people and places that have been left behind. Should they be the subjects of this election?

There are rural areas, Indian reservations, and inner-city neighborhoods where there are still people willing to work; where there is no free enterprise, no investment; where we could, by changing our tax laws and giving people like you the same incentives to invest in poor areas in America you have today to invest in poor areas in Latin America, in Africa, in Asia—I'm for that, by the way. I'm trying to get America to invest more money overseas, but we ought to have the same incentives to invest in poor areas in America.

Does this matter to you? I think it should. By the way, it's not only morally right; it's a good way to keep the economy growing without inflation. There are Indian reservations in this country where the unemployment rate is still 70 percent. If you cut it to 20 percent, just to 20 percent, all those people would become consumers as well as workers. It's noninflationary growth.

I'll just mention one other issue. You have to decide. I have found it incredibly ironic that in this most modern of ages, where I meet all these young people that have made fortunes in their twenties off .com companies—you know, I'm too old to make a living in this flourishing sector of our economy; and it is growing like crazy, you know.

I just was at the business roundtable, and all these heads of these Fortune 500 companies were trying to figure out why the Dow was going down while the Nasdaq was going up. And we're doing all these incredible things. I went in a little African village, and I saw a hookup from an American cable company and what they were putting in there so these kids could get modern maps to learn geography. I went into a *favela* in Rio with Pele, the great soccer player, and saw what an American company was doing there, through technology, to try to get these poor children in Rio a chance to have a different life. I have seen all these efforts to bridge the digital divide in America, all this neat stuff and a lot of more mundane things. I have a cousin in Arkansas who plays chess once a week with a guy in Australia. I mean, you know, it's the modern world out there.

I know in a couple of months, I'll have an announcement that will be one of the great honors in my life. I'll be part of—we will announce that the human genome has been fully sequenced, and we can now set about the business of analyzing the very blueprint of life and why we turn out the way we do and how we deal with various things. We may be able to block broken genes with gene therapies to stop people from ever developing diabetes, to stop people from ever developing Alzheimer's, to stop people from ever developing breast cancer, all of these things. It's just going to be unbelievable.

Now, don't you think it's interesting, with all this stuff going on, that the biggest problem we face as a society is still the oldest one? We're still scared of people who are different from us. And it's easy, once you are frightened or uncertain, to turn that into distrust, to turn that into dehumanization, to turn that into violence, and then to have no conscience about it because they didn't matter anyway.

I mean, it's interesting—you look around the world, and you see tribal wars in Africa where hundreds of thousands of people die in a few days. You see continuing religious and ethnic tensions in the Middle East, and religious tensions continue in Northern Ireland, where I thought we had the door closed, and it got knocked open again. And what—this is outrageous—what happened in the Balkans, the problems they're having in Russia in Chechnya.

You just look around the world on any given continent, and in America you say, "Well, look at us. We're the most successful, diverse democracy in history." That's true, but we had a shooting at a Los Angeles Jewish center where Jewish kids were shot at because they were Jewish. A Filipino postal worker was killed because he was both Asian and a Federal employee, and the guy that killed him thought that was a double shot. Matthew Shepard was killed because he was gay. The guy in the Middle West killed the former African-American basketball coach at Northwestern, killed a Korean Christian walking out of church, and three or four other people, and he said he belonged to a church that didn't believe in God but did be-

lieve in white supremacy. And I could go on. You know all these issues.

What I want to say to you is that times are good, but we should be humble about this. We should be grateful, and we should be humble, because we have, number one, not repealed all the laws of human nature, which means there is still the darkness of the heart to deal with, and number two, good times are either made the most of or squandered. And I just want to leave you with this. A lot of you here are younger than me, but a lot of you are about my age, maybe a little older.

When we celebrated, earlier this month, the longest economic expansion, peace or war, in our history, I was very interested in that, because I love economics and I study it every month. I read all the numbers and everything and try to keep up with what's going on.

So I went back and studied the last longest economic expansion in our history. Do you know when it was? Nineteen sixty-one to 1969, the years of my childhood and youth, when I should have been doing .com companies. *[Laughter]* But let me tell you about them. In 1964, the height of the expansion, I graduated from high school. My President had been killed a few months before, and the country was heartbroken. But contrary to a lot of the Monday morning quarterbacks that look back, it was not the beginning of American cynicism. That's not true. We united behind President Johnson. He got off to a great start. He was leading us toward passing civil rights legislation, legislation to help the poor.

And in 1964, when I finished high school, there was this enormous sense of optimism and confidence in the country that, a, the economic good times would go on forever; b, we would resolve, in a lawful way, through our Congress, our civil rights challenges; and c, we would certainly prevail without controversy in our country in the cold war against communism. Those things would happen. Everybody thought so.

Two years later, we had riots in our streets. The country was already divided over Vietnam. Four years after I graduated from high school, I was graduating from college 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 2 months

after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he wouldn't run for election. And the country was totally divided. And there were more riots in the streets, and the National Capital was the scene of a riot in which block after block burned to the ground.

A few months afterward, we had a Presidential election, the first Presidential election in modern times fought on the grounds of us versus them, where President Nixon, a man of immense talent, I might add, was elected on a theme of the silent majority. Now, some of you remember that. Now, if there's a silent majority, there must, by definition, be a loud minority, right? I was one of them; I know. *[Laughter]* So it was "us" and "them." A few months after that, the economic expansion was over. And we've been having us-and-them politics ever since. And for 7 years, I have worked to end that, I think with greater success out here in the country than in the Capital, but nonetheless, it's been an honor to try.

I'm telling you this as a citizen now, why I'm glad you're here. You have to help us define what this election is about. And that's what we're going to use your contribution for. But those of you who are older, like me, you remember what it was like in the mid-sixties. As a citizen, I have waited for 35 years for my country to be in a position to build the future of our dreams for our children. That's what this is about. It's not just about choosing a person. We have to define the job and the direction. Then the choice will take care of itself. You know what I think. But just remember how quickly these things can get away and what a heavy responsibility we have to make the most of a truly magic moment.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Bren Simon, Danny Abraham, Cynthia Friedman, and John and Nancy Carter, luncheon cohosts; Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Democratic National Committee; Lori Deutsch, wife of Representative Peter Deutsch; Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr., of North Carolina; and former professional soccer player Pele, Minister of Extraordinary Sports of Brazil.

Remarks on the Shooting Death at Theo J. Buell Elementary School in Michigan and an Exchange With Reporters in West Palm Beach

February 29, 2000

The President. I would just like to say how very sorry I am about the shooting death of the first grade student at Buell Elementary School in the Mount Morris community near Flint, Michigan. I know the prayers of America are with the child's family and fellow classmates and all the people of that small community.

I think it is important that today our thoughts be with them. And I don't know, obviously, all the facts; I may not even have as many as you do. But I think this is once again a call to us to do whatever we can to protect our children from this sort of violence and this tragedy. And I'm just very, very sorry, and I wanted to say that.

Gun Control Legislation

Q. Mr. President, is there anything that can be done to stop tragedies like this?

The President. Well, what I'd like to do, Mark [Mark Knoller, CBS Radio], is make sure I have all the facts before I say that—you know, if we had had one of the laws that we're proposing, it would make a difference. I don't want to—I think today is a day for grieving and regret, sympathy and support for the family and the community and the other kids and the people in that school. This must be an agony for all of them.

But I think that—I do think just generally that we should be really pushing for the child safety locks and even more for the investment in safe gun technology so we can complete this research and see if we can't develop guns that can only be fired by their adult owners.

I think that I'm very troubled. I don't want to comment too much on the facts of this case, but if you get away from this case, as I said when I was inside, just the accidental death rate of our young people from guns is so much higher than any other country that it's clear that we need to keep working on this, and I hope that we will.

Q. You said inside it has been a year since Columbine. Is there anything you can do, a

stick you can use to get Congress to move? Are you willing to say, for example, that you would veto Commerce-Justice if it doesn't have the protections you're looking for?

The President. Well, I believe that we will get some action this year, and I wouldn't rule anything in or out. But I don't want to get into the tactics now, except to say that—keep in mind there is a budget—there is a bill in conference, and one of them is pretty good, and one of them is not. We've got to try to get the best bill we can out of conference. And I just hope that everyone will weigh in and try to get this done. It's very important to the future.

Q. You did seem to indicate in your speech inside that this should be an election issue.

The President. Oh, I do believe that. I think the issue of—not this terrible tragedy, but the issue of gun safety, I think, definitely should be. We ought to make a decision as a people. That's why we have these elections. And we can do that, you see, without any name-calling or anything. People can just state what their positions are and why, and the American people can make their judgments. But I do think, to me, it ought to be one of the big goals of our country to make America the safest big country in the world, and therefore, is a proper subject of debate in this election. It's nothing but an issue, so there's no need for name-calling or anger or anything else. People should just state what they feel should be done, and the American people can make up their mind who is right.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:48 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to 6-year-old Kayla Rolland, who was shot and mortally wounded by a 6-year-old classmate in Mount Morris Township, MI. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the Establishment of the President's Council on the Future of Princeville, North Carolina

February 29, 2000

As the first city in the United States founded by former slaves, Princeville, North Carolina, holds a special and highly significant place in our Nation's history. In its early days, Princeville was called Freedom Hill by fleeing African-Americans who settled along the banks of the River Tar under the protection of Union troops at the close of the Civil War. In more recent times, repeated flooding from the River Tar has caused damage in Princeville which was devastated this fall by the particularly severe floods that accompanied Hurricane Floyd.

Today I am announcing the creation, by Executive order, of the President's Council on the Future of Princeville, North Carolina. This Council will bring together representatives from 12 Federal agencies, several key members of my Cabinet, and chaired by Sally Katzen of the Office of Management and Budget. It will work with elected officials, the private sector, community and non-profit groups to recommend measures to preserve and protect Princeville for the future. I have asked the Council to move promptly to recommend action that my administration can take to help repair and rebuild Princeville and, to the extent possible, protect the town from future floods.

We have taken many steps since this terrible flooding hit Princeville last fall, from immediately dispatching emergency workers to making resources available for the people of Princeville in their efforts to rebuild. It is my firm belief and the policy of my administration that we must do more to help the people of Princeville who have bravely chosen to stay and rebuild their badly damaged hometown. We owe them our best efforts.

It is enormously important that, as we celebrate Black History Month and honor the

long and proud history of this uniquely important town, we also take steps to preserve it for the future. As we embark on this new chapter in Princeville's history, I would like to thank Representative Eva Clayton who has led the charge for this step I am announcing today, and who has worked tirelessly on behalf of this important town. I also thank Representative Charles Rangel for his support of this important effort.

Executive Order 13146—President's Council on the Future of Princeville, North Carolina

February 29, 2000

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to develop recommendations for Federal agency actions to address the future of Princeville, North Carolina, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Policy. Princeville, North Carolina (Princeville) has a unique place in American history. This small city in eastern North Carolina was the first city in the United States founded by ex-slaves. In its history, Princeville has been damaged by floods many times. Recently, it was devastated by floods caused by Hurricane Floyd. In response to the damage, appropriate Federal agencies have already begun repair and recovery efforts to assist Princeville. However, it is the policy of this Administration to do more to help this city that occupies such a significant place in our history. Therefore, this order will create an interagency council to develop recommendations for further actions to address the future of Princeville.

Sec. 2. Establishment. (a) There is established the "President's Council on the Future of Princeville, North Carolina" (Council). The Council shall comprise the Secretaries of Defense, Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Commander of the Army Corps of Engineers, the Administrator of the Small Business Admin-

istration, the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, the Assistant to the President for Economic Policy, and the Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs, or their designees, and such other executive department and agency (agencies) representatives as the President may deem appropriate. The Council shall consult with other agencies and State and local governments, as appropriate.

(b) The Director of the Office of Management and Budget, or his designee, shall serve as Chair of the Council.

Sec. 3. Functions. The Council shall develop recommendations for the President on further agency and legislative actions that can be undertaken to address the future of Princeville. In developing the recommendations, the Council shall consider, among other things: (a) the unique historic and cultural importance of Princeville in American history; (b) the views and recommendations of the relevant State and local governments, the private sector, citizens, community groups, and non-profit organizations, on actions that they all could take to enhance the future of Princeville and its citizens; and (c) agency assessments and recommendations to repair and rebuild Princeville, and, to the extent practicable, protect Princeville from future floods. The Council, through its Chair, shall submit its recommendations to the President. Where appropriate, the Council's recommendations shall include draft legislation requesting additional funding or other authorities to aid in the reconstruction and protection of Princeville.

Sec. 4. Coordination. At the request of the Chair, agencies shall cooperate with and provide information to the Council.

Sec. 5. Judicial Review. This order is not intended to, nor does it create, any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers or employees, or any other person.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
February 29, 2000.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., March 1, 2000]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on March 2.

Proclamation 7276—National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, 2000

February 29, 2000

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States. Estimates show that physicians will diagnose approximately 130,000 new cases of colorectal cancer this year, and, of those persons diagnosed, more than 56,000 will die from the disease. Colorectal cancer takes such a deadly toll because it usually has no identifiable symptoms and often goes undetected until it is too late to treat.

Our most effective weapon in defeating colorectal cancer is early detection and treatment. Through a regular screening program that includes fecal blood testing, periodic partial or full colon examinations, or both, health professionals can detect and remove pre-cancerous polyps before they turn into cancer. Such cancer screening should become a routine part of preventive health care for anyone over the age of 50, because the risk of developing colorectal cancer increases with age. Individuals with a personal or family history of inflammatory bowel disease, colorectal cancer or polyps, or ovarian, endometrial, or breast cancer are also at a higher risk for developing colorectal cancer.

We can draw hope from the progress that is being made in colorectal cancer research. The National Cancer Institute of the National Institutes of Health recently launched a large research study to test two of the most promising drugs to treat colorectal cancer, and new technologies are giving us more powerful tools to increase the ease and accuracy of colorectal screening. By continuing to support such research, raising awareness of risk factors for the disease, promoting the widespread adoption of regular screening, and encouraging everyone to exercise regularly, we can save thousands of lives each year

and dramatically reduce the risk of colorectal cancer.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 2000 as National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. I encourage health care providers, advocacy groups, policymakers, and concerned citizens across the country to help raise public awareness of the risks and methods of prevention of colorectal cancer and to use the power of our knowledge to defeat this silent disease.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., March 1, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on March 2.

Proclamation 7277—Women's History Month, 2000

February 29, 2000

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Last spring, three women astronauts paused during a shuttle mission to pay homage to the past. Thousands of miles into space, floating above the floor of the shuttle, they raised a women's suffrage banner and posed for a picture. Astronaut Ellen Ochoa, a participant in this special tribute and a member of the President's Commission on the Celebration of Women in American History, said, "We wanted to show how far women have come in this century and to honor the people who fought for our rights." Each year during the month of March, citizens across our country pause to honor the

many heroes whose diligence and determination have helped to forge our Nation and enable people like Ellen Ochoa and her colleagues to soar so high.

Women's History Month is about highlighting the extraordinary achievements of women throughout our history, while recognizing the equally significant obstacles they had to overcome along the road to success. It is about the women who bravely donned uniforms and fought for our country. It is about the passion and vision of women educators like Mary McLeod Bethune, who, with only \$1.50 in her pocket, founded a school for young black women. It is about the perseverance and pioneering spirit of women like Margaret Chung, the first Chinese American woman physician, who supported herself through medical school by washing dishes and lecturing on China. It is about Alice Paul's fight for the vote and Elizabeth Wamaker Peratrovich's campaign to end discrimination against Alaska Natives. It is about the writings of Zora Neale Hurston, the paintings of Georgia O'Keeffe, the leadership of labor organizer Dolores Huerta, and the trailblazing artistry of photographer Margaret Bourke-White. It is also about the millions of unsung women whose contributions have made life better for their families and their communities.

Inspired by the courageous pioneers who came before them, women today continue to shape our Nation's destiny. Last year, Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Eileen Collins became the first woman commander of a space shuttle mission. American violinists Sarah Chang, Pamela Frank, and Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg were the first women to take home the prestigious Avery Fisher Prize in its 25-year history. And, in a game attended by the largest crowd of all time for a women's sporting event, the U.S. women's soccer team captured the World Cup. Today, 58 women hold seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, and 9 women are United States Senators. More women hold high-level positions in my Administration than in any other in history. And in the private sector, women own nearly 9 million small businesses, employing millions of Americans and contributing significantly to the strength of our economy.

As we honor the past and celebrate the present, we must also focus on the future. Our choices today will have an enormous impact on the destiny of our daughters and granddaughters, our sons and grandsons. We must rededicate ourselves to forging a society in which gender no longer predetermines a person's opportunities or station in life. We must shatter the glass ceiling; eradicate wage discrimination; and ensure that every American has the tools to meet both family and work responsibilities and to retire in security. By breaking down the remaining barriers and opening wide the doors of opportunity, we can make the future brighter for women and for all Americans.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 2000 as Women's History Month. I encourage all Americans to observe this month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities, and to remember throughout the year the many contributions of courageous women who have made our Nation strong.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., March 1, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on March 2.

Proclamation 7278—American Red Cross Month, 2000

February 29, 2000

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

After the great San Francisco earthquake of 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt asked his fellow Americans to respond by contributing to the American Red Cross, "the only organization chartered and authorized by

Congress to act at times of great national calamity.” Almost a century later, the American Red Cross continues to serve our Nation and the world, providing compassionate assistance to people suffering in the aftermath of personal, local, national, or international disasters.

As one of our country’s premier humanitarian organizations, the Red Cross provides disaster relief to millions of people both at home and abroad. In the past year alone, the American Red Cross rose to meet many challenges—from Hurricane Floyd on the eastern seaboard to the Kosovo relief effort to the terrible earthquakes and floods that struck countries around the globe. Following the tragic shootings at Columbine High School and in other schools and places of work and worship, the American Red Cross sent in crisis counselors to support grieving families and friends of the victims. In Taiwan and in Turkey, the American Red Cross worked with other Red Cross affiliates to provide solace and support to earthquake survivors; after the crash of EgyptAir Flight 990, Red Cross grief counselors brought comfort to victims’ families. In total, the American Red Cross responded to nearly 64,000 disaster incidents last year alone and helped provide information to thousands of families separated from loved ones by war or disaster.

The services that the American Red Cross provides go beyond disaster relief. Its biomedical services program provides patients in more than 3,000 hospitals nationwide with the latest in high-quality, state-of-the-art blood and tissue services. Last year it provided more than 700,000 emergency and personal services for military personnel and their families, including relaying messages from their families to the three American servicemen held captive by Yugoslav forces. And in communities across the Nation, more than 12 million people received Red Cross instruction in lifesaving techniques last year, ranging from first aid and CPR to water safety and boat handling.

Forming the backbone of the American Red Cross is a vast network of nearly 4.5 million blood donors and 1.3 million dedicated volunteers who ensure that help will be there when and where it is needed. Virtually every

community in the United States is served by an American Red Cross chapter, Blood Services region, or both; and as we have seen demonstrated so dramatically over time, no community is immune to the sudden and devastating disasters that require the services and stewardship of the American Red Cross. Each of us owes a lasting debt of gratitude to this extraordinary organization that has given so much to our people, our country, and our world.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America and Honorary Chairman of the American Red Cross, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 2000 as American Red Cross Month. I urge all the people of the United States to demonstrate support for their local Red Cross chapters and to become actively involved in furthering the humanitarian mission of the American Red Cross.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., March 2, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on March 3.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Social Security Reform Legislation

February 29, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Leader:)

I am pleased that Congress is moving forward with a bill that eliminates the retirement earnings test above the normal retirement age. As I said in my 1999 State of the Union Address, “we should eliminate the limits on what seniors on Social Security can earn.” The retirement earnings test was created during the Great Depression to encourage older workers to retire in order to open up more jobs for younger workers. As the baby boomers begin to retire, it is more important than ever that older Americans who

are willing and able to work, should not have their Social Security benefits deferred when they do.

We should reward every American who wants to and can stay active and productive. I encourage Congress to send me a clean, straightforward bill to eliminate the retirement earnings test above the normal retirement age.

Eliminating the retirement earnings test above the normal retirement age is a first step toward Social Security reform. I remain committed to making bipartisan progress on Social Security this year. I ask Congress to pass legislation that would extend the solvency of Social Security to about 2050 while taking significant actions to reduce poverty among elderly women. Last year I transmitted legislation to Congress that would have used the interest savings earned by paying down the debt to make Social Security stronger. If we agree to this simple step, we can extend the life of Social Security to the middle of the next century while also modernizing Social Security to reduce poverty among elderly women.

Moving forward on these two, simple steps would be a substantial downpayment on Social Security reform. It would demonstrate that we can work together, building the bipartisan trust necessary to finish the job of meeting the long-term Social Security challenge.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Richard A. Gephardt, House minority leader; Trent Lott, Senate majority leader; and Thomas A. Daschle, Senate minority leader. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Remarks at a Reception for Congressional Candidate Elaine Bloom in Miami, Florida

February 29, 2000

Thank you. Well, I was looking out at the beautiful vista—first, I was looking down on you. Did you see me up there? And I was looking at this magnificent home and think-

ing how fortunate we are, all of us, to be in this country at this moment, to be free citizens, to be able to come here to support someone in whom we believe.

I want to begin by thanking Phil and Pat Frost. They have been with me a long time, too, and I am honored to be here in their magnificent home. I want to thank all of you who helped to spearhead this immensely successful event for Elaine tonight. I want to say that I'm glad that her children, David and Anne, are here, and I'm sorry the judge couldn't come. But far be it for us to get him in trouble. We want him to stay on the bench and make good decisions. *[Laughter]*

I want to say how grateful I am for the friendship and support I have enjoyed from Congressman Peter Deutsch and his wife, Lori, who is here. And I thank them so much for their service to the United States. And Representative Sally Heyman, we're glad you're here.

And I want to say a special word of thanks to my longtime personal friend Bill Nelson. I am thrilled that he is running for the Senate and thrilled he is doing so well.

I want you to know why I'm here tonight, besides the fact that I've been dying to see Phil and Pat's house. I'm here for three reasons. One is, Elaine was there for me when only my mother thought I could be elected. *[Laughter]* And she reminded me tonight that when we first met, she said, "Now, look, I'm going to ask you some questions, but I want you to know in advance I'm going to be for you anyway, so you don't have to tailor your answers, just shoot me straight." And we've been shooting each other straight now for, well, more than 8 years.

I'll never forget when the first significant victory I won was in the Florida Democratic Convention when they had this straw poll. And Elaine and some of my other supporters hauled Hillary and me from meeting to meeting to meeting. I thought New Hampshire was tough till I met these people in all these little caucuses, you know. I had to answer 400 questions. When I got through with that caucus, I said, "I hope we did well, but I'm so tired, I don't care whether we win or not anymore." *[Laughter]* It was an amazing experience. And we had a lot of opponents, a lot of good people running for

President in 1992. And we got a majority of the Florida Democrats at that caucus, and I feel profoundly indebted to Elaine Bloom.

The second reason I'm here is because she embodies the philosophy that we call the new Democratic philosophy that is conservative in part but also liberal in part. I believed, when I ran for President, that there was something really wrong with the way things were going in Washington. I felt that it bore no reasonable relationship to the work I had done for a decade as Governor, the work that she was trying to do here in the legislature with people like Governor Chiles and Governor, now Senator Gramm before him. The work of getting people from different walks of life together, defining goals, defining opportunities, defining problems, then figuring out what to do about them.

Washington was a place where, maybe because people felt they were so far from their constituents and it was so hard to get that 15 seconds on the evening news at night, they seemed to me to be more interested in sort of lobbing rhetorical bombs at one another and putting each other in little boxes and repeating over and over and over again the fights of yesterday as America kept moving into tomorrow.

I was absolutely convinced then that there was nothing wrong with this country that couldn't be fixed by what was right with it. And so, with Elaine's help, with the Frosts' help, with a lot of you in this room, I asked the American people to give me and then give me and Al Gore a chance to see if a unifying philosophy of opportunity for every American and responsibility from every American and a community including all the people of this country could lead us to new ideas and a new direction. And now it's worked out pretty well.

And I am immensely gratified to have been a part of the progress this country has made. I'm proud of it, and I know I am not solely responsible for it. If it hadn't been for—[*ap- plause*]*—*Thank you. It wouldn't have been possible if this country weren't the greatest environment for entrepreneurs and business people in the world. It wouldn't have been possible if the American people weren't committed to working harder and smarter, and

as the economy grew they didn't ask for inflationary pay increases. They understood they were in a world economy, and they ought to be tied to the growth of their enterprises. It wouldn't have been possible without the support of the members of my party in Congress, who, without any help from the Republicans, voted to bring the deficit down in 1993, got interest rates down, and started this long job-creating boom. So I am very grateful.

But the third reason I'm here is the most important of all, and that is that in 11 months or so I'll be just another citizen, but the work of America goes on. We've turned this country around. We're moving in the right direction. But if you really think about what you'd like America to be, there's a great deal yet to be done.

Yes, we've turned deficits to surpluses. But I think we ought to take this country completely out of debt, for the first time since 1835, to keep interest rates down for a new generation. Yes, the schools are getting better and more of our kids are going to college. But I don't think we ought to stop until we've got the certainty that every child, without regard to race or income, can get a world-class education and every person can go on to college and stay there for 4 years and not have to drop out because of the cost.

I don't think we should stop until we find a way for every American to have affordable health care, until we find a way to—[*ap- plause*]*—*thank you. And Florida—I don't think we should stop until we know that when the baby boom generation retires—and I'm the oldest of the baby boomers; that's everybody born between 1946 and 1964—when we all get into our retirement years, there will only be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. And I don't believe we should stop until we have modernized Social Security and Medicare for the 21st century and secured it so that the baby boomers can retire without the gnawing worry that we will be an awesome burden to our children and our children's ability to raise our grandchildren.

And I can tell you, the people my age, we think about this a lot. And I'm trying to get this Congress to lengthen the life of Social Security, to lengthen the life of Medicare, to add a prescription drug benefit, but we can't stop until that's done. I'm proud of the fact that we've done a lot to save the Everglades, but I don't think we should stop until we reverse the tide of global warming and prove we can grow the economy as we improve the environment.

I'm proud of the fact that we've made progress for peace and freedom around the world, but there are still threats from biological and chemical and nuclear weapons. There are threats from terrorists. And there are still profound problems in every corner of the world that people have because of their racial, religious, ethnic, and tribal differences. And we shouldn't stop.

And I can tell you that it profoundly matters who is in the Congress. It's a big deal whether Bill Nelson gets elected to the Senate or not, more than you can imagine. There's going to be somewhere between two and four justices appointed to the Supreme Court. I hope that Vice President Gore will be making those appointments, but the ultimate backstop is the Senate.

That's another reason I'm so interested in the Senate race from New York—one of many. *[Laughter]* And I want to thank—so many of you tonight said something nice about Hillary or said you were helping her, and I'm very grateful to you for that.

It matters because we're going to have to decide whether to follow the path of fiscal responsibility or not. We have doubled spending on education and training in my term, while getting rid of the deficit. And we did it by giving you the smallest Government in 40 years, by eliminating hundreds of programs. Was that a conservative decision or a liberal decision? Well, it was conservative: We got rid of the deficit. It was liberal: We doubled spending on education and training. That's the kind of discipline and values and vision we need. It matters.

And finally, I'd like to thank all the law enforcement people who are here for supporting Elaine Bloom. One of the reasons I wanted to be identified with her is that she knew you could be a Democrat and still be-

lieve we ought to drive the crime rate down and that you could be tough and smart about crime. That's very important to me.

I don't know if you had a chance to watch the news tonight, but a 6-year-old child near Flint, Michigan, shot another 6-year-old child and killed her today. Now, I don't know all the facts yet. I thought I had them, and I didn't. The first version I had wasn't right, but anyway, somehow—what's a 6-year-old kid doing with a gun, anyway? And what can we do about it?

I've supported putting 100,000 police on the street. I've supported more efforts in the drug war. I've supported putting 50,000 more police out there now in high-crime areas. But we've got to do more to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and away from children. We just do. There's a huge difference there. Is that conservative or liberal? The NRA crowd says that's liberal. I think that I'm trying to conserve life. I think it's conservative in the best sense, and I think it's the right thing to do.

So I'm here because I feel obligated to a woman I love, not only because she supported me, because when she disagreed with me or was worried about it, she'd call and chew me out about it. And I like that. Too many people are afraid to tell Presidents what they think, and that's what gets Presidents in trouble. She was a true friend. She always told me exactly what she thought. I'm here because she shares my philosophy. But mostly I'm here because of you, and because when I'm just a citizen and I'm not President anymore, I want my country to do well.

I said something today at lunch I'd just like for you to think about, and I'll say it much briefer tonight. The last time we had—we now have the longest economic expansion in history. The last longest economic expansion in history was 1961 to 1969, the years in which I grew up, graduated from high school, went to college, and finished college.

When I graduated from high school in '64, Lyndon Johnson was President, passing civil rights legislation. We thought the economy would boom forever. We thought the civil rights problems would be solved in law, not in the streets. We thought we would prevail in the cold war without any division in our country.

When I graduated from college 4 years later, it was 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't run for reelection. The streets of Washington had burned after Dr. King was killed, and this country was divided right down the middle on the Vietnam war, and we were divided in a Presidential election where President Nixon said he represented the silent majority, which meant those who disagreed were in the loud minority, people like me.

And we've been having these "us" and "them" elections ever since—"us" and "them" politics. Now, the country has been turned around, but we have big challenges out there. And what I want to say to you is that, in 1964, if anybody told us the wheels had run off by 1968, no one would have believed it.

This is not just a time for celebration; this is a time for humility and for resolve. As a citizen—not as President, as an American—I have been waiting for 35 years for my country to be in a position to build a future of our dreams for our children. That work will have to be done by the people who will be here after the 2000 election.

That's the most important reason I am here. I trust Elaine Bloom with my daughter's future, with my grandchildren's future, with the future of America. And I ask you all to be vigilant and disciplined and active in this election. Just because we're doing well doesn't mean you can relax. You should feel a heavier obligation. And whenever you are tempted to think it doesn't matter, you remember this story I told you tonight. I have waited 35 years. We've got a second chance, and we need to make the most of it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:25 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Phillip and Patricia Frost, reception hosts; Elaine Bloom's husband, Philip, a judge in Florida's Eleventh Circuit, and her children David and Anne; State Representative Sally Heyman; Senatorial candidate Bill Nelson; and 6-year-old Kayla Rolland, who was shot and mortally wounded by a 6-year-old classmate at Theo J. Buell Elementary School in Mount Morris Township, MI. Elaine Bloom is a candidate for Florida's 22d Congressional District.

Memorandum on Major Illicit Drug Producing and Drug Transit Countries

February 29, 2000

Presidential Determination No. 2000-16

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Presidential Determination on Major Illicit Drug Producing and Drug Transit Countries

By virtue of the authority vested in me by section 490(b)(1)(A) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (the "Act"), I hereby determine and certify that the following major illicit drug producing and/or major illicit drug transit countries (and certain jurisdictions) have cooperated fully with the United States, or have taken adequate steps on their own, to achieve full compliance with the goals and objectives of the 1988 United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances:

The Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, China, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Hong Kong, India, Jamaica, Laos, Mexico, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Taiwan, Thailand, Venezuela, and Vietnam.

By virtue of the authority vested in me by section 490(b)(1)(B) of the Act, I hereby determine that it is in the vital national interests of the United States to certify the following major illicit drug producing and/or major illicit drug transit countries:

Cambodia, Haiti, Nigeria, and Paraguay.

I have determined that the following major illicit drug producing and/or major illicit drug transit countries do not meet the standards set forth in section 490(b) for certification:

Afghanistan, Burma.

In making these determinations, I have considered the factors set forth in section 490 of the Act, based on the information contained in the International Narcotics Control Strategy Report of 2000. Analysis of the relevant U.S. vital national interests, as required under section 490(b)(3) of the Act in the case of the countries certified on this basis, is attached. Given that the performance of all of these countries/jurisdictions has differed, I

have also attached an explanatory statement for each of the other countries/jurisdictions subject to this determination.

You are hereby authorized and directed to publish this determination in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 1.

Remarks to the UNET and MCI WorldCom Employees in Ashburn, Virginia

March 1, 2000

Pennsylvania and Michigan Shootings

Thank you very much, Melissa. To Bernie and John and Mark, thank you for welcoming me and Ambassador Barshefsky and our whole team here. I leaned over to John when I looked at all of you out here, and I said, now, "I can't believe all these people are off work now. What terrible thing can happen?" [Laughter] What could I be responsible for doing to the Internet today? [Laughter]

I am profoundly honored to be here, and I thank all of you for allowing me to come. I came here to talk about your future; but because this is the only opportunity I'll have today to speak, through you and the media, to the American people, I have to make a brief comment about one other issue.

Today there was another terrible shooting in the Wilkesburg community in Allegheny County in western Pennsylvania. We don't know all the facts yet, but it was a bad situation. Yesterday, of course, that tragedy occurred in Michigan, where a very young child was killed by another very young child. I just talked to the superintendent of schools there, right before I came out.

I want to say two things about it to all of you. First of all, these are personal tragedies that, because of instantaneous media coverage, we all know and feel. And we owe the families of the victims and the communities our prayers and our best wishes.

Secondly, as citizens, these incidents, particularly the one yesterday in Michigan, call on us to recognize the fact that we simply haven't done everything we can do to keep

guns away from criminals and children. And so today I have to say again to Congress: You have had legislation now that would require child safety locks, would close the gun show loophole, would take other steps to keep guns out of the wrong hands for well over 6 months. You're supposed to take a recess next week. Before you take the recess, please send me this legislation. It will help keep America safer.

Normal Trade Relations Status for China

Now, I want to talk to you today about your future, which is unfolding at a breathtaking rate. We were talking before we came out. I said, "Tell me a little about the growth." So John said, "Well, 5 years ago we had 40 employees. Today, we have 8,000." Bernie said, "Five years ago, we had 2,000 employees. Today, we have 88,000." You're getting along reasonably well. [Laughter]

I have been going around the country saying to my fellow Americans everywhere that in a new economy in which we have now in the last 7 years 21 million new jobs, the lowest unemployment and welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years, the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded, the highest homeownership on record, and the longest economic expansion in our history, the world is changing so fast, if you want to keep doing well, you have to keep trying to do better; that it is very important that all of us understand that we'll never get anywhere by standing still. Although given the pace at which you're growing, I'm glad I'm giving you the chance to stand still for a little bit today. [Laughter]

This shift in our economy is changing the landscape of our country, both symbolically and literally. I first saw the landscape of northern Virginia as a freshman in college, 36 years ago. But it looks different than it did when I became President, 7 years ago. Everywhere you look, there's a brandnew facility. This place is truly amazing. And beneath all the booming business parks and

green pastures, there are countless miles of cable, conducting more than over half the Internet traffic in the entire world.

There are more high-tech firms in northern Virginia today than there were farms in 1970, when the region led the State in the production of milk. *[Laughter]* Here in Loudoun County, there are more high-tech workers than there were residents in 1980. It has been an amazing thing. Workers like you and firms like UUNET are the new engines driving our economy. You represent about 8 percent of our employment but 30 percent of our growth over the last decade, something you can be very proud of.

The new technologies that you use are also finding their ways into every sector of our economy, making companies of all kinds more competitive. UUNET provides a lot more than Internet service. Every day you show us something about the power of ideas, the power of imagination, the power of enterprise, values that are at the core of America's character and at the bottom of this booming new globalized economy, in a marketplace that is much, much wider and fuller of possibility than any of us could have imagined when this company sold its first commercial connection in 1988.

In just 12 years, you've extended your reach to 100 countries, expanding your global network by more than 1,000 percent a year. The global network is a big part of your future, and that's what I want to talk about today, and what Government's role in that is.

People ask me all the time, well, this is the highest percentage of growth in jobs in the private sector and the smallest percentage in the Government of any recovery we've ever had, since we could measure such things. As a matter of fact, since I've been President, we've reduced the size of Government to its smallest point in 40 years, since 1960.

So people say, "Well, what is your job, Mr. President? What is the Congress' job?" I think our job is to create the conditions and provide the tools for you to do your job. What does that mean? That means we ought to invest in education and training and new technologies. There's a lot of research that can't

efficiently and economically be done in the private sector.

The Internet originally grew out of Government-funded research, which, as I was reminded today by your leaders, is one of the reasons there are so many high-tech firms in northern Virginia. Second, we've got to give you an overall healthy economy, which is why we had to get rid of the deficits and start running surpluses and why we ought to pay this country out of debt, keep interest rates down, and make capital available for other companies to grow as well.

The third thing we ought to do is to promote genuine competition. That was behind the gentle nudge that Bernie gave me about the Baby Bell comment. *[Laughter]* He was—actually, it was a little inside joke, but he was referring, in a supportive way, to the fact that the Vice President and I fought hard in the Telecommunications Act, when we rewrote the telecommunications bill for a pro-competitive position. And because we fought hard, we got it, and you not only have companies like yours that have swollen in size in the last 5 years, there are hundreds and hundreds of companies that didn't even exist 5 years ago that are able to make it today because the United States took a procompetitive position in the Telecommunications Act. Those are our jobs. That's what we're supposed to do.

But finally, we are a country with 22 percent of the world's income and 4 percent of the world's population. And you don't have to be Einstein or even particularly good with a computer to know that, if you've got 22 percent of the world's income and 4 percent of the world's population and you would like to keep doing better, you have to sell something to somebody else—*[laughter]*—and that in a world that is increasingly globalized, you're better off when they're better off. It's not good for you that African countries which are capable of growing at 7, 8, 10 percent a year are so burdened by debt that they can't educate their children or provide health care to their people. It's not good for you if, because we refuse to open our markets to some countries in the Caribbean or Latin America, they don't open their markets to ours, and they grow more slowly, and their people remain poorer. You'd be better off if they get

richer and more of them will be on the Internet.

We live in a time when, really, doing the morally right thing happens to be good economics. But in order to do it—again I would say, you will do a lot of it. I've seen enterprising kids in poor African villages logging onto the Internet and finally seeing a map that's up to date and learning geography and doing all kinds of things. People will take care of this if we establish the right conditions and provide the tools.

One of the things that we have worked hard on is to expand trade. Under Ambassador Barshefsky and her predecessor, we completed over 270 trade agreements. But in many ways, perhaps the most important of all is the agreement that—or the decision Congress will have to make this year and in the next few months on whether to let China come into the World Trade Organization by giving them permanent normal trading relation status with the United States.

If you've been following this debate at all, you know there is a lot of controversy about this in the Congress. And I won't go through all the arguments now, but let me just tell you, I can say this from my heart; you know, I'm not running for anything this year. *[Laughter]* And most days it's okay with me, but I'm not—*[laughter]*—most days.

But I care a lot about what this country will be like when the young people here in this audience are my age, when your children are your age. This is a profoundly important issue. It is, in the short term, the kind of decision that every country would wish for. Once in a generation you get a chance to open a market with over a billion consumers, the biggest potential market in the world.

Let me explain, first of all, what this agreement does. In return for China's entry as a full partner in the World Trade Organization, the United States would gain unprecedented access to China's markets. Today, with the Chinese, we have our second biggest trade deficit, tens of billions of dollars, because our markets are open to their products, and they should be, because we'll be better off if they do better. But their markets are not very open to our products and services. Under this agreement, Chinese tariffs in every sector, from telecommunications to automobiles to

agriculture, will fall by half or more in 5 years. For the first time, our companies will be able to sell and distribute products in China made by workers here at home without transferring technology in manufacturing—never happened before. For the first time, China will agree to play by the same open trading rules we do—never happened before.

Meanwhile, we'll get two tough, new safeguards against surges of imports which would threaten to throw a lot of Americans out of work in a short time under unfair trade practices. So these are the kinds of changes any President, regardless of party, would welcome, because Presidents, regardless of party, have worked to bring out these changes for more than 30 years now.

This is a good deal for American workers, for American farmers, for American business. It's a good deal for America. But the only way we can get this agreement is for Congress to give China permanent normal trading relations. This is one of the most important votes Congress will pass in this year and for many years to come. Next month, our Commerce Secretary, Bill Daley, and our Agriculture Secretary, Dan Glickman, are going on missions to China with dozens of Members of Congress to meet with people in Government and business and religious leaders who are interested in change in China.

It's very interesting to me that the more people go to China and spend time there, no matter what they do for a living or what their perspective is, the more likely they are to favor our bringing China into the world system of rule-based trade, because this is about economics and more than economics, and I want to say more about that in a minute.

But just think about the economics of high-tech companies. Today, China's tariffs on information technology products average 13 percent. When China joins the WTO, those tariffs will start to fall and be eliminated by 2005. China will open its Internet and its telecom markets to American investment and services for the first time. That's a huge deal.

Now, the magnitude of all this almost defies measurement. The number of Chinese

Internet users—let's just take that—quadrupled in the last year alone, from 2 million to 9 million. This year, the number will exceed 20 million. And you know what the internal dynamics of this technology are. You know how much your company has grown. Now, project that rate of growth onto a country that has over 1.2 billion people. And keep in mind, the United States is not being asked to do anything to get this agreement, except to treat them like a normal trading partner on a permanent basis and bring them into the WTO.

So what are we going to do? China doesn't have the information infrastructure to support 500 million Internet users yet. But UUNET already has a presence in Hong Kong. You could help them to build it.

Let's look at what happens if we didn't do it. Today, we've got a huge advantage in high-tech trade internationally. What would happen if we didn't take advantage of this? China will grow anyway, and someone else, not you, will reap the benefits of it. So if we turn our backs on this opportunity, we will be unilaterally disarming in perhaps the most vital area of our future economic growth.

And let me say, finally, this is about more than money. I saw a lot of you nodding when I said it was good morally and good economics to help lift the burden of debt from the poorest African countries if they're working to try to do better. I saw a lot of you nodding when I said it was the right thing to do to buy more from the Caribbean and Latin American countries if they were doing the right thing and opening their markets to us.

We have a decision to make here. The people who don't want to do this by and large think that China should not be taken into the World Trade Organization because we don't agree with all their political decisions. We don't like it when they repress human rights or political rights or religious expression. We don't agree with them that we should take little or no account of environmental impacts of economic decisions or that we shouldn't take strong steps to eliminate child labor and slave labor and things like that. We have differences.

But think of this. You know how much the Internet has changed America, and we were already an open society. I can look out in

this crowd and tell that many of you come from some place else. You know how much the Internet is changing where you came from and how much it could change if it were there. The same thing is true in China.

Everything I have learned about human nature in my life plus everything I have learned about China as President convinces me that we're a lot better off bringing them into the family of nations, into this common endeavor, than shutting them out. Do we know what China will be like in 20 years? Of course we don't. We can't control what they do. All we can control is what we do. But here again, I think our values will be advanced, along with our economic interests, if we give people a chance to be good partners. If you don't give them a chance, it's almost certain that they will react in a negative way.

So I ask all of you to think about this, because normally, Americans don't think about foreign policy much. But you know that with every passing day in a globalized economy, there is no longer a clear, bright line between an issue which is a domestic political issue and an issue which is a foreign policy issue.

With every passing day, these issues grow closer together. Do I like it when people's religious liberty is oppressed in China? No, I don't. But it's very interesting; most of the evangelicals I know who have missions in China want China in the WTO because they know that that will make it more likely that there will be more freedom of expression, more contact with the outside world, and a bigger stake in working with other countries.

This is about money, yes, but it's about more than money. It's about whether we can create a world where there's the kind of harmony across race and ethnicity and religion that there must be in this workplace that I can see just by looking around the room here. Wouldn't you like it if the world worked the way you do here? How could it be bad if companies like UUNET are able to make the tools of communications cheaper and better and more widely available to more Chinese people? It has to be good.

So I will say to you, I don't agree with everything the Chinese do. I'm sure they don't agree with everything I do. *[Laughter]*

And far be it for me to equate the two disagreements. [*Laughter*] I don't believe—in all seriousness, I don't believe it's right to crack down on people for their religious views or their political expression or because they want to be in an association like the Falun Gong. I don't think that's right. But I don't believe that we will have more influence on China by giving them the back of our hand instead of giving them a chance to build a different future.

That's what this is about. And I want every one of you to think about this. Look, economically, this is a no-brainer. It's in your interest. It will make this company a lot more jobs. But I don't ask you as citizens to check your values at the door. Every one of us believes in some things that money can't buy.

But I'm telling you, you just think about what you have learned in your life about human nature. The leaders of China are not foolish people; they're intelligent people. They know, if they open these markets, they know, if you go in there and everybody gets connected to the Internet, that change is coming more rapidly in ways that you cannot control, and people will be able to define their future independent of the Government's ability to control it more than ever before, whether you're talking about religion or politics or personal life choices or anything else. They know that. And they have made this decision, and we cannot let our disagreements with Government policy get in the way of our interest in a long-term partnership with the most populous country on Earth. So again I say, what is good economics is also consistent with our values.

The late Chief Justice Earl Warren once said that, "Liberty is the most contagious force in the world." I believe the Internet inevitably is an instrument of human liberty, and it will be in China as well if we continue to reach out to people.

So I'm asking you to do something if you agree with this. I want you to tell the Members of Congress, without regard to party, that represent your State—if you live here, if you live in Maryland, you live in West Virginia—I want you to ask them to support this. And I want you to tell them—I want you to tell them that you will stay with them on

this decision if they do, because this is very, very important.

You know, I'm grateful that, since I've been President, America has done well. I'm grateful for the chance I've had to make a contribution to it. But frankly, I'm much more interested in whether America continues to do well long after my tenure in office. And again I say to you, if you know in your business that—if you want to keep doing well, you always have to keep trying to do better and looking to the future, anticipating the changes, imagining how you want it to be.

I can't imagine a world that I want for my child and my grandchildren that doesn't include partnerships that are constructive with the big countries of the world, which promote human liberty as well as economic progress. That's what this whole thing is about.

So I say to you, I came here today because you are the symbol of 21st century America. You are the embodiment of what I want for the future. And because of what you do for a living every day, because of how you see and feel the way the world is changing and how you see what it can become, you are in a position, that most of your fellow Americans are not in, to understand the importance of this. So again I say to you, you're doing great. I want you to do better. And I think we can do better and do good, but we have to start this year by making sure that we don't turn away from this profoundly important opportunity.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:15 p.m. at UUNET Technologies. In his remarks, he referred to Melissa Pizzo, vice president and general manager, service delivery organization, John Sidgmore, chairman, and Mark Spagnolo, president and chief executive officer, UUNET; Bernard J. Ebbers, president and chief executive officer, MCI WorldCom, Inc.; Kayla Rolland, who was shot and mortally wounded by a 6-year-old classmate in Mount Morris Township, MI; Larry J. Allen, superintendent, Mount Morris School District; and former U.S. Trade Representative Michael (Mickey) Kantor.

Radio Remarks on Read Across America Day

March 1, 2000

On March 2, volunteers across the country will celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday by reading to more than 20 million youngsters in the third annual Read Across America Day. The event brings together athletes, entertainers, and business leaders and others to help spread the joy of reading to our Nation's youth and to ensure that all children develop the reading skills they need to succeed in school and in life. I urge all Americans to participate.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at 3:45 p.m. on February 25 in the Oval Office at the White House for later broadcast. This transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 1. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Actuality Line.

Statement on Assistance to Mozambique

March 1, 2000

This evening I am announcing my intention to augment substantially U.S. assistance to flood-ravaged Mozambique, and to ongoing regional efforts to address the emergency caused by flooding in southern Africa.

The United States has already committed \$12.8 million from the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Department of Defense in support of relief activities. This includes over \$4 million for search and rescue air operations and the deployment of a water rescue team and boats from Metro Dade, Florida. Already, one U.S. military aircraft delivered relief supplies to Mozambique today, and a second will shortly arrive in South Africa. Our assistance also includes food and funds to support efforts to control the spread of disease. Other countries are contributing generously as well. But we can do more to address the needs of the nearly one million people who have been displaced in the region and who face more flooding in the days to come.

I have approved the deployment of a Joint Task Force to the region to assist in the relief

effort. The deployment will include six C-130 support aircraft to deliver relief supplies, six heavy-lift helicopters to assist in search and rescue, and small boat search and rescue capability. The deployments will help support the relief effort in Mozambique and elsewhere in the region.

All Americans have been deeply moved by the tragic events in southern Africa. At the same time, we have admired the determination of the governments and people of the region to meet this challenge. We have also been gratified by the generous response of the American people and others in the international community.

I offer the strong support of the Government and the people of the United States to the people of Mozambique, and all of southern Africa, and pledge that we will work with you to address this crisis.

Proclamation 7279—Irish-American Heritage Month, 2000

March 1, 2000

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

More than two centuries ago, our founders envisioned a new Nation, a land free from tyranny and filled with opportunity, prosperity, and liberty for all. Many Irish people, faced with severe hardship in their homeland, embraced the dream of a more promising future and left behind Ireland's shores, their families, and their friends for a new beginning in America. Each year during the month of March, we celebrate these courageous men and women of Ireland and remember with pride their many contributions to our Nation.

With strength, courage, wit, and creativity, Irish Americans have flourished in our diverse Nation of immigrants. Writers such as Flannery O'Connor and Eugene O'Neill have transformed our literature; entrepreneurs like Henry Ford helped revolutionize American industry; performers such as Gregory Peck and Helen Hayes have enriched the arts; patriots such as Audie Murphy, our most decorated soldier of World War II, redefined the meaning of

courage; and social reformers such as suffragist Leonora Barry and labor organizer Mary Kenney O'Sullivan fought for the rights of others. Generations of Irish Americans have worked alongside their fellow Americans to build a more perfect Union, and America is a stronger Nation because of them.

During his visit to Ireland in 1963, President Kennedy reminded us that "our two nations, divided by distance, have been united by history." Today, people on both sides of the Atlantic are united not only by history, but also once again by a dream of a better way of life. In the spring of 1998, the people of Ireland and Northern Ireland sought to make that dream a reality at home when they voted overwhelmingly in support of the Good Friday Accord. America remains committed to the Irish people as they continue working to forge a brighter future in their own land. The road ahead is long, but the promise of peace is still within reach, and its rewards are great. This month, as we celebrate Saint Patrick's Day and our shared heritage with Ireland, we remember as well our common love of liberty, commitment to progress, and quest for lasting peace, and we look toward a future as proud as our past.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 2000 as Irish-American Heritage Month. I call upon all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:01 a.m., March 2, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on March 3.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on International Agreements

March 1, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)

Pursuant to subsection (b) of the Case-Zablocki Act, (1 U.S.C. 112b), I hereby transmit a report prepared by the Department of State concerning international agreements.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to Iraq

March 1, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c) and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Iraq that was declared in Executive Order 12722 of August 2, 1990.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 1, 2000.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 2.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the 2000 Trade Policy Agenda and 1999 Report on the Trade Agreements Program

March 1, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 163 of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (19 U.S.C. 2213), I transmit herewith the 2000 Trade Policy Agenda and 1999 Annual Report on the

Trade Agreements Program. The Report, as required by sections 122, 124, and 125 of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act, includes the Annual Report on the World Trade Organization and a 5-year assessment of the U.S. participation in the World Trade Organization.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 1, 2000.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 2.

Interview With Katie Couric of NBC's Today Show

March 2, 2000

Michigan Shooting

Ms. Couric. Mr. President, thank you so much for joining us.

The President. Good morning, Katie.

Ms. Couric. Good morning. Let me ask you, first of all, when you heard the story of a 6-year-old boy in Michigan, a first grader bringing a gun to school and shooting to death his 6-year-old classmate, what was your reaction?

The President. Well, first, I think I had a normal human reaction. I didn't respond as President. I was just—as a parent I was heartbroken, and then I was angry. I thought, you know, how did this child get the gun in the first place? What's a 6-year-old doing with a gun?

Gun Control Legislation

Ms. Couric. When something like this happens, politicians often jump on it as an excuse for more gun control. But I know that, Mr. President, you're very proud of pointing out that gun deaths have dropped to their lowest levels in more than 30 years in this country. So should we view this more as a tragedy than a reason to call for more gun control?

The President. Well, it's both. The gun death rate has dropped to its lowest point in 30 years, but it's still by far the highest of any advanced nation in the world. And if we had passed the child trigger lock provision and we applied it to all new guns, then

at least those guns would not be used by 6-year-olds to kill other 6-year-olds. I think that's very important. That's a part of this bill, which also closes the gun show loophole, and the background check law, bans the import of large ammunition clips, that the Congress has had for 8 months now with no action.

So I'm going to call the leaders of both parties in both Houses and ask them to come down here and break the logjam. There's been a House version and a Senate version of this bill for 8 months, and they have done nothing, and meanwhile, 13 kids every day—every single day there are 13 children who die from guns in this country. So I do think we need more legislation.

Ms. Couric. Well, why is it locked in committee, why has it been stalemated? And when would you like them to come to the White House?

The President. Well, I think it's been locked in committee because the Senate—the Vice President cast the tie-breaking vote in the Senate, so we got a tough bill in spite of fierce lobbying against it by the NRA. And the two Houses can't resolve their differences. But maybe this tragic death will help. We need these child trigger locks on the new handguns. That will begin to make a big difference. And then in this year's budget, I've asked them to fund some more research into smart gun technology, which would enable us to have guns that could only be fired by the adults who own them. That also would be a big advance.

One of the things that's being debated in Michigan is whether there should be parental accountability provisions. We had provisions in our law for that, so that all States would have these laws—several do, but most don't—and those were taken out, so maybe they'll be revisited in the conference as well.

But the main thing is, if we can just get the child trigger locks and fund investment in the smart gun technology, I think we'll be a long way down the road. Of course, I think ultimately what we ought to do is license handgun owners the way we license people who drive cars. I think that is the critical next step. And I hope that we will consider that, as well.

Now, this guy stole a gun, apparently—that's the allegation—in the house where the child took it. But it would clearly make a big difference in the future to people's lives.

Gun Registration/Gun Licensing

Ms. Couric. Let me deal with some of those issues that you've just raised, Mr. President. What about registering guns? All Americans are required to register their cars. Why not require them to register guns?

The President. You could do that, but the problem is there are over 200 million guns out there, some say 250 million guns out there now. And most of the experts with whom I talked before I made my proposal believe that if we required all handgun owners to be licensed, we could achieve the same results. That is, whether you've got an old gun or you're buying a new gun, if people could come in when they do get new guns and get a license, then I believe we'd have the same result.

I'm not sure, practically, that we could get all the guns registered in this country because there are so many out there already. So I'd like to begin with that. You know, keep in mind, we had all those kids die at Columbine, and when I fought for the Brady bill—which has kept a half a million felons, fugitives, and stalkers from getting guns—and the assault weapons ban, about somewhere between 8 and 12 Members of Congress were defeated in the next election by the NRA because they voted for that.

And then when all those kids were killed at Columbine, I thought, surely, we can close the gun show loophole, have the child safety locks, and maybe have the parental responsibility provisions and ban ammunition clips. And those bills have been just lingering up there for 8 months. I don't think most Americans have any idea what a stranglehold the NRA has had on this Congress. And the people in our party have taken the lead, with a few brave Republicans, in trying to fight for sensible legislation. But we need the public aroused on this. We need the public to be heard.

I would not be opposed to registering guns, as well, but I just want you to understand there are practical problems with that, and you get most of the benefit if you license

the gun owners. So I would like to see us start with that.

Ms. Couric. When it comes to licensing, Mr. President, Wayne LaPierre, who you know is the executive vice president of the NRA, said, quote, "Criminals aren't going to stand in line to get their photos taken. They're not going to stand in line—stand" rather "for licenses. You're walking way out on a limb."

The President. Well, you could say that about people with automobile licenses, too. But when people don't have gun licenses and they're found with guns and they're in violation of the law for that, very often you can get them before they commit a crime.

If the facts, as they've been reported, are true about the tragic circumstances in which this 6-year-old boy lived and have the even more tragic consequence of killing that totally innocent young girl—this man apparently stole that gun. But the point is, he could never get a license to carry a handgun.

Ms. Couric. But meanwhile, is it practically possible to check every gun owner in America to see if he or she is carrying a license?

The President. Well, none of these things will happen instantaneously, overnight. But yet, they will begin to make a difference.

Look, when we passed the Brady bill, Katie, let me remind you, people said, "Well, this won't make any difference because criminals don't get their guns at gun stores." It turned out, a lot of them did. It turned out we were able to deny 500,000 people who were trying to buy handguns the right to do so because they were felons, fugitives, and stalkers. Now, there are a lot of kids alive and there are a lot of adults alive in America because we did that.

Now a lot of them are using the gun shows or these urban flea markets. If we close that loophole, do the background check there, license new handgun owners—license—excuse me—handgun owners, and put safety locks, these trigger locks on the guns to protect the kids—and then the next big step is to technologically develop guns that can only be fired by their lawful owners—we can turn this situation around.

But like I said, we've got over 200 million guns out there. We're losing 13 kids a day.

The accidental rate of children—that's another thing I'd like the American people to think about—the rate of kids being killed by accident with guns is 9 times higher in America than that of the next 24 biggest countries combined—combined.

So we have not done nearly enough, and we need to identify these things and just systematically go do them. None of them interfere with the right of any lawful citizen to hunt or to engage in sport shooting. And it's an unbelievable thing, after what we saw clearly at Columbine and all the problems that were there, that 8 months have gone by, and the Congress can't act. And the reason they can't act is because the heat the NRA has put on them.

Cooperation of Gun Manufacturers

Ms. Couric. Mr. President, why haven't you publicly asked gun manufacturers to produce these so-called smart guns voluntarily?

The President. Oh, I have. Let me say, we're getting some support from responsible gun manufacturers. Many of them have already said they want to put the child safety locks on their new guns. Many of them are engaged in this technology.

But what I want to do is to have the Government also fund some of the research, just as we funded the initial research that led to the Internet, just as we fund the initial research that is leading to the sequencing of the human genome. A lot of this basic research to solve big national problems often starts with Government funding. So I'd like to see the Government do its part.

But I have asked the gun manufacturers to do so. And some of the responsible manufacturers have already said, "Yes, we're going to go with the child safety locks, and we want the smart gun technology." I just think we ought to get there as quickly as we can, which is why I want the Government to invest as well.

Presidential Candidates and Gun Control

Ms. Couric. All the Presidential candidates seem to agree on this point, so you would think it could be accomplished. What is the NRA's biggest beef, in your estimation, about the technology that would enable only

the person who owns a gun to actually fire it?

The President. Well, first of all, I don't think that's accurate, that all the Presidential candidates do.

Ms. Couric. Well, George W. Bush favors trigger locks, I understand. John McCain—

The President. This morning.

Ms. Couric. Pardon?

The President. This morning. Senator McCain voted against the Brady bill.

Ms. Couric. But he says he favors technology that would enable the gun user to wear a special bracelet. He said that last night.

The President. They were against the Brady bill. They're against extending—closing the gun show loophole. They're against the licensing of handgun owners.

But nobody could be against technology. So I hope that we can get 100 percent of the Congress to at least vote for the research and the new technology.

NRA Position on Smart Guns

Ms. Couric. What is the NRA's biggest beef about smart guns?

The President. I don't know that they'll be against smart guns. But they're basically against anything that requires anybody to do anything as a member of society that helps to make it safer. That is, if they were making this argument on car licensing or licensing of car drivers, they would say that everybody has an individual right to drive a car, and therefore, no lawful car owner should be required to undergo the terrible burden of getting a car license because there are some people who are irresponsible and shouldn't be driving cars.

I mean, that's the essential argument they're making. They're saying guns are special, guns are different than cars, and the rights of individual citizens are far, far more important than the safety of society as a whole. That's their argument, and I just disagree with them.

Ms. Couric. An NRA spokesman actually told us last night that this isn't about making guns safer; it's about prosecuting criminals and that your Justice Department hasn't done enough in that area.

The President. Well, we've increased gun prosecution since I've been here, and we have a lot of people in jail for it. All I can tell you is we have a higher percentage of people in jail than all the other advanced countries, and they have a lower gun death rate. Why is that? That's because they don't have an NRA in their country, and they take sensible steps to protect children and society as a whole from people having guns who shouldn't have them, doing things they shouldn't do with them. You've got to keep guns away from criminals and children if you want a safe society.

Look, if the NRA were arguing years ago in this vein, they'd be against airport metal detectors because, after all, everybody—most people that go through airport metal detectors are innocent. Why should we burden them with having to go through and empty their pockets and take out their money clips and all that because there's just a few criminals around? And you know, you're interfering with their individual rights to walk on an airplane. That's the argument they make. You shouldn't burden an individual law-abiding handgun owner, because most of them are lawful, just because there are a few criminals.

But the point is that society takes steps with speed limits, with licensing laws, with airport metal detectors, and any number of other ways, where we all make a little bit of sacrifice in time and effort to comply with a system that makes us all freer. And we still get to do our lawful activity.

So I just think they're wrong about that. They're saying that guns are different. Guns are different than cars. Guns are different than any other area of our national life where we seek for common safety. We protect ourselves from the people who would abuse our liberty, abuse our freedom, and abuse our safety. And I just think they're wrong about this, and I hope that a majority of the Congress will agree, and I hope that more and more members of the Republican Party will agree. As I say, we have had some few brave members of the Republican Party that have joined the vast majority of Democrats in trying to responsibly deal with this without in any way undermining the right of people to

do legitimate hunting or sport-shooting activities.

And we can do this. We can make America a lot safer.

Juvenile Justice Legislation

Ms. Couric. Mr. President, before we go, in closing, when do you plan to invite congressional leaders to the White House to discuss the juvenile justice bill?

The President. Well, I'd like them to come down next week, as soon as we can set it up, because we're running out of time, and we need to get out of this terrible logjam. And I hope that these tragedies will give a little impulse, a profound sense of obligation to do that. As again I say, nobody is trying to interfere with individual rights here. What we're trying to do is to promote the common safety of the American people, and we're not nearly safe enough. All you've got to do is look at these incidents.

Can we eliminate every problem? No. Is there a silver bullet that will solve it overnight? No. Can we save a lot of lives, including a lot of children, 13 every day—13 funerals a day? You bet we can, and we ought to.

Ms. Couric. Mr. President, again thank you very, very much for spending some time with us this morning. We really appreciate it.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 7:08 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

Remarks on Patients' Bill of Rights Legislation

March 2, 2000

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you, and good morning, Dr. Herald, thank you for your powerful statement. I would like to thank Senator Kennedy, Senator Specter, Senator Chafee for being here; and Representatives Norwood and Dingell, Representatives Berry, Morella, and DeLauro; Secretary Shalala; Secretary Herman.

I especially thank the doctors and nurses who stand with us today, the Patients' Bill of Rights coalition, representing our Nation's

top health, consumer, and provider organizations.

Dr. Herald's testimony was powerful but, unfortunately, as she made it clear, not unique. For more than 2 years, we've heard health care professionals tell us the same thing. For more than 2 years, we've heard heart-wrenching accounts of families across our Nation denied the basic patient protections they need. For more than 2 years, we've worked for a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights that says you have the right to the nearest emergency room care, the right to see a specialist, the right to know you can't be forced to switch doctors in the middle of a treatment, the right to hold your health care plan accountable.

Along the way, with the help of others in our administration, I've done everything I could, through executive action, to extend patient safeguards to some 85 million Americans who get their health care through Federal plans, to provide similar patient protections to every child covered under the Children's Health Insurance Program. But no State law and no executive action can do what Congress alone has the power to do. Only Federal legislation can assure all Americans and all plans get all the patient protection they need.

Thanks to the leadership of Congressman Norwood, Congressman Dingell, and the other Members here, the House of Representatives passed such a bill, with the support of 275 Members, including 68 members of the Republican caucus. It is a truly bipartisan bill.

Later today a conference committee will meet to take up the legislation. Many of the conferees do not reflect the will of the majority in the House or the will of the majority in the country. I told Congressman Norwood right before we came in here that I think this issue is the only issue with which I have dealt since I've been President that generated any controversy where there is, in the country, almost no difference in the level of support between Republicans, independents, and Democrats. Every major national survey

shows that well over 70 percent of all Americans, without regard to their political party, support a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. The American people support it, and they're entitled to have their elected Representatives ratify it.

The Norwood-Dingell bill is the only bipartisan patient protection bill on the table. So far, it's the only bill that can make its way to my desk. I will not sign legislation, as Dr. Herald said, that is a Patients' Bill of Rights in name only. It's not a real Patients' Bill of Rights if it denies people the right to see a specialist, if it fails to guarantee access to the nearest emergency room care, if it denies the right to stay with a health care provider throughout a course of treatment, and if it has a weak appeals process that's tilted against the patients, if it doesn't include a strong enforcement mechanism to hold a health care plan accountable, or if it leaves more than 100 million of our fellow Americans out. We need a bill that covers all our fellow citizens, not one that provides cover for special interests.

Again I say, this is not a partisan issue anywhere else in the entire United States of America. And I am honored that we have had the bipartisan support we have had. This legislation has the endorsement of more than 300 health care and consumer groups across our country. So as the conference committee gets down to business, I ask them to listen to the voices of people like Dr. Herald, the people who live in the health care system, the people who know how it works, the people whose first concern is for their patients and their families and their future. It is time to reach across party lines and do this.

Let me say that if the Congress will send me a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights today, I'll send every one of them an invitation to a signing ceremony tomorrow. *[Laughter]* Nothing would please me more than to see this issue removed from the context of partisan political debate and embedded in the daily lives of all our citizens.

It is now my privilege to present the sponsor of the Norwood-Dingell bill, a long-time

dentist, a man who has simply acted on his convictions and his experience. And I think we would all do well to listen to him. It's probably a little harder for him to come out for this bill than it was for me, and I feel particularly indebted to Congressman Charlie Norwood.

Representative Norwood.

[At this point, Representatives Charlie Norwood and John D. Dingell and Senators Arlen Specter and Edward M. Kennedy made brief remarks.]

The President. Well, I just want to end on sort of a cautionary but clarion note. Where I come from, this exercise that we have just engaged in is known as preaching to the saved. [Laughter] And it's very important. But this is one of those examples where the public and the people that really know how the system works are in the same place. And I believe a majority of Members of Congress, if—as Congressman Norwood said so eloquently, if they're permitted—they're given a good bill to vote for, they'll vote for it. So the only way that we won't get a good bill is if this conference committee prevents the Congress from voting on a bill they would like to vote for, that is consistent with not only what the majority of the American people want but virtually 100 percent of the medical professionals in the country and a majority of the Congress.

So that's what the stakes are. I am profoundly indebted to the Members who are here, to all the health care professionals who are here, to Dr. Herald who spoke so well. But I ask you to remember the work is ahead of us. And I think we need to, all of us, each in our own way, go to work to impress upon that conference committee their profound responsibility to give the Congress and the country the bill they want to vote on and the bill they want to live under.

Let's get to work. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. in Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Mary Herald, member, American College of Physicians-American Society of Internal Medicine, who introduced the President.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Biotechnology, Foundation, and International Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters

March 2, 2000

Vaccine Research

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, as you can see, I have a very distinguished group of leaders here in the White House today, and I thank them all for coming—leaders of the international organizations concerned with the health of people throughout the world; Minister of Health from Uganda; the leaders of the pharmaceutical industry and biotech industry and the foundation community in our country who are profoundly interested in joining forces to fight against diseases that kill both people and progress in the world's poorest countries, diseases like AIDS, TB, and malaria, each of which claim over a million lives a year, and others as well.

We agreed that the solution must include the development and the delivery of effective vaccines. That's how we got rid of smallpox and come close to eliminating polio. So today we're beginning a partnership to eradicate the leading infectious killers of our time, speeding the delivery of existing vaccines and getting to the heart of the problem, the lack of incentives for private industry to invest in new vaccines for people who simply can't afford to buy them.

I have attempted to put a comprehensive package on the table so that the United States can do its part to change this: a billion-dollar tax credit to speed the invention of vaccines; a \$50 million contribution to a global fund to purchase vaccines; substantial increase in research at the National Institutes of Health.

I've asked the World Bank to dedicate more lending to improve health, and Mr. Wolfensohn has been very forthcoming here today, and I thank him for that. The private sector is also responding to this challenge, and I want to thank them and recognize the

commitments that have been announced here today. Merck is committing to develop an AIDS vaccine not just for strains of the virus that affect wealthy nations but for strains that ravage the poorest nations as well. This is profoundly important. It's also donating a million doses of Hepatitis B vaccine to those who need it most. American Home Products will donate 10 million doses of a vaccine to—strains of pneumonia and meningitis in children. SmithKline Beecham will expand its malaria vaccine program and begin new vaccine trials in Africa and will donate drugs worth a billion dollars to eliminate elephantiasis, which is a painful and potentially very crippling and disfiguring tropical disease. Aventis Pharma will donate 50 million doses of polio vaccine to five war-torn African nations.

This is a very important beginning. It will save lives and make it clear that we're serious. But all of us agree there is more to do. We have to first build on the bipartisan support that now exists in our Congress to enact the research and experimentation tax credit and the tax credit that we proposed for this specific purpose and to get the funding increases through. I will go to the G-8 meeting in Okinawa this summer to urge our partners to take similar steps. And so let me say, I am profoundly grateful.

Michigan and Pennsylvania Shootings

Now, because this is my first opportunity to be with you when you can say something back today, the press, I also want to just say a word about the terrible shooting yesterday, which followed the killing of the 6-year-old child the day before in Michigan.

These two incidents were very troubling, and they have individual causes and explanations and doubtless will require individual responses. But they do remind us that there is still too much danger in this country and that for more than 8 months now, Congress has been sitting on the commonsense gun safety legislation to require child safety locks, to close the gun show loophole, and the background law, and to ban the importation of large ammunition clips.

I have said before, I will say again today, I'm going to invite the leaders of this con-

ference down to the White House to talk about what we can do to break the logjam. I also think we should go further. We ought to invest in smart gun technology. We talked about investing the vaccines; we're not too far from being able to develop technology which could change all the handguns so that they could only be fired by the adults who purchase them. And that would make a big difference. Apparently, the child who was killed was killed by another child with a stolen gun. If we had child trigger locks on all the guns, it wouldn't have happened.

And finally, I think that it's long, long past time to license purchases of handguns in this country. Car owners are licensed. All drivers are licensed, whether they own a car or not. I think it's time to do that.

So I hope that we will see some action. But the most important thing now, thinking about this child, is, if we had child trigger locks on all these guns, we could keep them alive. So I hope Congress will break the logjam. And I'm going to invite the conferees down here to do it.

Let me finally say again, this is a truly astonishing turnout of people around this table, and together, if we work on it over the next few years, we can literally save the lives of millions of people. And it couldn't be done without the presence of all these people. And I'm very grateful to them. Thank you.

Thank you very much.

Gun Control Legislation

Q. Mr. President, if legislation was sent to you that included the riddance of ammunition clips and included safety locks but did not include the gun show loophole, would you veto that?

The President. Well, I don't know. I think they'd have a very hard time explaining why they did it. Let me remind you, when I signed the Brady bill, and the NRA opposed it, they said, "Oh, this Brady bill won't do any good now because criminals don't buy their guns through gun shops. They buy their guns at gun shows and these urban flea markets or on the sly, one on one. They don't use gun shops." Well, come to find out, 500,000 people couldn't get a handgun because they were felons, fugitives, or stalkers. And it's a safer country because of it.

Now that we want to extend the background check to the gun shows, they say the people—they say the criminals don't use the gun shows, even though 5 years ago they said they did. There is no logical reason to let these gun shows off the hook on the background checks. And the technology is there to do it without causing a total breakdown. And I suggested, if they're worried about the inconvenience to the buyers and the sellers, they could always—and they have these things out in the country somewhere—they could always deposit the weapon with the local sheriff's department while they're waiting to do the background check.

There are all kinds of fixes for the alleged problems here, and there's no reason to do the—*the Brady bill is saving people's lives and keeping guns out of the wrong hands.* But we do need the child trigger locks. That child would be alive today if that gun had had a child trigger lock on it that the other 6-year-old child could not have fired. And we just need to—we've got to have it. We've got to have it.

The accidental death rate of children by guns in this country is 9 times higher than the rate of the next 25 biggest industrial economies combined. I mean, that's something that—if you forget about the intentional crime, just look at the accidents, we've got to do it, and we need to do it tomorrow. We need to do it as quickly as we can.

International Monetary Fund

Q. Mr. President, what are your specific objections to the German IMF candidate, and what do you expect to happen from here?

The President. We've handled that in the appropriate way, I think, through Secretary Summers. Let me say, I want there to be a European Director of the IMF. I will not support an American candidate, even though I have enormous respect for Mr. Fischer. And I'm gratified that the African nations expressed their support for him. He's an enormously able man. But we have a naturalized American over there leading the World Bank in a great way, and I think the Europeans should lead the IMF. And it would suit me if a German led the IMF.

I don't—nobody is playing any games here. We went through a terrible crisis in the late nineties in Asia. We in the United States went through a terrible problem with our friends in Mexico when their economy was on the verge of collapse and causing others in Latin America and, indeed, far beyond Latin America to teeter. We think the IMF will become even more important in the years ahead.

We want the strongest possible person in the world to head it. It's a big, big, important job. But I am completely committed to having a European head of the IMF. And it would suit me if the person were from Germany. I'd like to see Germany play a bigger role in all these international institutions.

Religious Right

Q. Mr. President, how do you feel about Senator McCain's remarks about the leaders of the religious right? Would you care to associate yourself with his description of what's wrong?

The President. Well, they've been a lot rougher on me than they have on him. [*Laughter*] I thought it was rather interesting that he was—you know, they weren't for him, and I understand that.

Look, let me say what I think is the—I think that people of faith who believe that their faith drives them to certain political positions should be able to pursue that, their political views, whatever they are, in American politics. I just don't believe they ought to say that people who disagree with them are somehow unworthy of receiving the same consideration they expect to receive in the political arena.

And so I don't want to—I think that for the last 20 years, we've all been too focused on harsh rhetoric and the politics of personal destruction, and I don't want to contribute to it today. But I've been the recipient of some of their venom, and I don't want to respond in kind. What I want to make is I think most people who take positions in politics take them not because they're the prisoners of interest groups but because that's what they believe. And there are plenty of differences that ought to be debated, and then the voters should make their judgments.

And I think any attempt to demonize or, in effect, perform the first plastic surgery on these candidates and to treat them like they're not even people, is wrong, whoever does that. So I don't want to contribute to that. I welcome the members of the religious right into the American political community, and I welcome their right to vote against me at every election. [Laughter] I do. It's part of what makes America a great country. I just don't think they should be condemning of other people, particularly in ways that may not be true, and certainly in ways that are almost cruel.

I think what we need to do is to tone down the personal destruction and turn up the focus on the big challenges facing the country, and we'll all be better off. They ought to be into politics, but we ought to just tone it down a little bit.

Funding for Kosovo

Q. Mr. President, last night Senators were here meeting with your Joint Chiefs of Staff, where they were asked for another \$2.6 billion in supplemental aid to Kosovo. One of the main concerns these Senators had was whether or not the allies were pulling their fair share. Do you believe that the allies are contributing equal portions that the U.S. is putting into this?

The President. The EU, the European allies, will pay the big majority of the continued costs of maintaining order and building the infrastructure and the future of Kosovo. We are being asked to pay a minority of the money that I think is more or less in line with our fair share and in line with the fact that we paid the majority of the costs for conducting the military campaign that brought the Kosovars home.

But I know it's difficult for Congress to come up with this money, and they'd rather spend it someplace else. But just like we're talking about this vaccine issue and how, if we spend money here, it's good for Americans as well as for the people around the world.

It would be a good thing if we can prove that we can end ethnic cleansing and slaughter in the Balkans, and nobody else has to be drug back there to fight in another war, or we don't have to figure out how to handle

and take care of a million refugees who will have their health problems and their other problems. And so, as expensive as this is, as General Shelton always says, the cheapest peace—the most expensive peace is cheaper than the cheapest war.

And so I hope the Congress will go along here. But it is a minority share, and it should be. The Europeans are shouldering the lion's share of the burden.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:55 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Minister of Health Crispus W.C.B. Kiyonga of Uganda; James D. Wolfensohn, president, World Bank Group; Kayla Rolland, who was shot and mortally wounded by a 6-year-old classmate in Mount Morris Township, MI; and Stanley Fischer, first deputy managing director and acting managing director, International Monetary Fund, who was nominated for the position of managing director of the IMF. A reporter referred to State Secretary for International Finance Caio Koch-Weser of Germany, who was also nominated for the position of managing director of the IMF. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the First Estimate of E-Commerce Retail Sales

March 2, 2000

Today the Commerce Department released the first-ever official estimate of retail E-commerce sales—or “E-tail” sales. This is a historical landmark that symbolizes and helps measure our transition to a new information economy. We first started keeping track of retail sales on a monthly basis in 1951. The announcement that E-tail sales over the Internet and other electronic networks reached \$5.3 billion in the fourth quarter of 1999 is an important step to ensure that we have accurate and timely information about the economy in the 21st century.

This is only the latest evidence of the dramatic contribution that the Internet, information technology, and E-commerce have made to what is now the longest economic expansion in history. When I became President in 1993, there were 50 sites on the World Wide Web. Today, there are more than 10 million. The information technology

industry now accounts for fully one-third of our economic growth, and the jobs it creates pay almost 80 percent more than the private sector average. Using the Internet, families can obtain lower prices and better choices for everything from groceries to home mortgages to automobiles. Our goal must be to continue to support the basic research that has allowed the Internet to flourish, to enable every American to enjoy the benefits and opportunities of the new economy, and to ensure that the privacy of individuals is protected in the information age.

**Memorandum on Emergency
Disaster Assistance to Southern
Africa**

March 2, 2000

Presidential Determination No. 2000-17

*Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the
Secretary of Defense*

Subject: Drawdown Under Section 506(a)(2) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as Amended, to Provide Emergency Disaster Assistance in Southern Africa

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by section 506(a)(2) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, 22 U.S.C. 2318(a)(2) (the "Act"), I hereby determine that it is in the national interest of the United States to draw down articles and services from the inventory and resources of the Department of Defense, for the purpose of providing international disaster assistance to Southern Africa, including Mozambique, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Botswana.

Therefore, I direct the drawdown of up to \$37.6 million of articles and services from the inventory and resources of the Department of Defense for Southern Africa, including Mozambique, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Botswana for the purposes and under the authorities of chapter 9 of part I of the Act.

The Secretary of State is authorized and directed to report this determination to the Congress immediately and to arrange for its publication in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

**Remarks Honoring the 1999 NCAA
Football Champion Florida State
Seminoles**

March 2, 2000

The President. Thank you very much. Please be seated. Well, President D'Alemberte, I was hardly old enough to vote the first time I met you. [Laughter] You're aging well. [Laughter]

Coach Bowden, welcome. I also want to welcome all the Floridians who are here. I thank Senator Graham and Senator Mack for coming; and Representatives Boyd, Brown, Deutsch, Foley, and Miller—and we have Senator Breaux from Louisiana is here, and Congressman Blumenauer from Oregon are here. I don't know if they're trying to spy for their football teams—[laughter]—but we're honored to have them. The mayor of Tallahassee is here, Scott Maddox; and State Representative Margie Turnbull. We welcome all of them. And mostly, I want to say a warm word of welcome to the Seminoles. I want to welcome you back to the White House.

This was the first national champion football team that I welcomed at the White House, in early 1994. And that team was 12 and 1; this team is undefeated. I came in with you, and I'm going out with you.

This team has won 109 games, this Florida State team, in the 1990's. Truly the team of the decade in American football. In the first Sugar Bowl of the new millennium you played a Virginia Tech team that you got way ahead of, but I think you must respect them a lot because they didn't give up. And Michael Vick and his Hokie teammates turned out to be worthy adversaries, Coach. And for those of us who love football, it was a sight to behold.

We all sat on the edge of our seats as you reclaimed the lead in the fourth quarter with your 85-yard scoring drive and quarterback Chris Weinke's touchdown pass to Ron Dugans. It was a 46-29 victory, hard won and richly deserved. After it was over, I think there wasn't a single football fan in America who doubted that Florida State was truly the best team in the country and a deserving national champion.

I could say a lot about all the players and the ones who had starring roles in the games and not just the championship game but the other games. I watched several of them on television last year. But I want to say a special word of personal admiration and respect for Coach Bowden.

I have watched him year-in and year-out. I have watched him be gracious in victory and gracious in defeat, which is more difficult. Of course, it's easy if you don't lose very much. [Laughter] That makes it a little easier. But I have been immensely impressed by the leadership that he and his team have brought to the young men that have been on this football team, especially this year, but also in past years.

Bobby, I was told that for 24 years you had an empty picture frame on your desk, waiting for an undefeated team, and I'm glad you can finally fill that picture frame. Congratulations to you.

And let me say to all the young men on this team, some of you will play some more football and go on into the pro ranks, and if you do, I wish you well. Most college football players, even on national championship teams, don't go on to play in the pro ranks, and I wish you well, too. What it takes to win on the football team, hard work and discipline and devotion to a common effort, give you pretty good lessons for life. And if you remember what brought you to the national championship, you'll be a champion when you leave Florida State, whether you play any more football, or not.

That is the ultimate lesson, Coach, of the way you run this team. I respect you; I admire you. I congratulate you all. And I thank you for giving the rest of us who just watch from the stands or on television a magnificent season. Thank you very much.

[At this point, Talbot D'Alemberte, president, Florida State University, and Bobby Bowden, coach, Florida State Seminoles, made brief remarks; and Todd Frier presented the President a team jersey.]

The President. That's great. I'm going to have to bulk up before I can—[laughter]. Well, this is terrific. I want to thank all of you. A lot of people here I see made the trip up from Florida, and I want to welcome

you to the White House and, in closing, just say this: When we have an event like this and we're able to invite people to come in here and express their pride and support for some remarkable achievement, it embodies the motto that the White House is the people's house.

And I think I should tell you that this is not only the first national championship of this new millennium, the first national championship team, but you are coming here in the 200th anniversary of the White House. It was completed in 1800, and John Adams, our second President, was the first person to live here. Every President since then has lived here.

And this house has seen a lot of changes and a lot of things come and go. But the feelings you have today, and I hope the pride you feel as Americans in being here, are what has sustained us now for 200 years. And if we just keep them, a couple hundred years from now, there will be another group of young people here celebrating an athletic achievement. Chances are they'll still be playing football, and the offensive line will average 500 pounds. [Laughter]

Thank you very much, and welcome.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:22 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Representatives Corrine Brown and Dan Miller; and Michael Vick, quarterback, Virginia Tech Hokies. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Talbot D'Alemberte, Bobby Bowden, and Todd Frier.

Interview With Dan Rather of the CBS Evening News

March 2, 2000

Gun Control Legislation

Mr. Rather. Mr. President, thank you for doing this. You're proposing registering guns like cars. But if you're going to do that, then why not take the next step and regulate guns, as we do cars? After all, if there's something seriously wrong about cars, the Government can regulate automobiles. Are you willing to do that?

The President. Well, first of all, I don't think we should minimize the impact that

licensing handgun owners themselves would have. That's what I want to do. And I think it's a very important step. Now, it's tough to pass in this Congress because most of the Republicans agree with the NRA that guns are different, and even though it might save lives, we shouldn't do it. But I think it's very important.

There's a practical problem with the guns, of course. There are over 200 million of them already out there. But I think if we would begin the process of making handgun owners get a license before they can buy a gun, pass a Brady background check, and then have a gun safety course, I think it would make a difference.

I think if we did that, plus had child safety locks, closed the big loophole in the background registration law by covering the gun shows and the urban flea markets, and then continue this technology into safe guns so that as soon as possible we can sell guns and adjust them so that, by fingerprints, they can only be fired by the adults who own them, all these things together would make our country a much safer place. And I'm going to continue to fight for it.

We need to start by passing this legislation that the Congress has had for 8 months now. The Senate passed a pretty strong law, with the Vice President casting the tie-breaking vote. The House passed a much weaker law. And they've just been sitting on this for 8 months. I hope that these last 2 tragic days will finally move the Congress to act. And I'm going to meet with the leading conferees on the two bills in the next few days to try to do that.

Mr. Rather. But you're not prepared to take the step to try to regulate guns?

The President. I think that the most important thing we can do now is to pass the legislation before the Congress, and then try to pass legislation that would require the owners themselves, people who want to buy handguns, to be licensed, just as car drivers are. I think that's the next big step, and I think it will make a big difference.

Just with the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban and the more police on the street, we've got the murder rate down to a 30-year low. But it's still way too high. And the accidental death rate from children is as-

tronomical. It's 9 times higher than the next 24 industrial nations combined. So we've got to do more with this. And I want to focus on this agenda. I think it will drive the death rate down from guns both for murders and from accidental death rates.

Michigan Shooting

Mr. Rather. Mr. President, how, if in any way, would your new proposals have prevented or even helped to prevent the shooting of this 6-year-old girl in Michigan?

The President. Well, I think—there are two things I'd like to mention. One is something that is still in the bill. If this gun had a child trigger lock on it, then the child, in all probability, could not have figured out how to undo the child trigger lock and fire the gun. So that's very, very important.

Then I had a provision which neither the Senate nor the House passed, to make national a law that today I think fewer than 20 States have, which would hold adults responsible for the kinds of activities that this young boy tragically engaged in when he killed that little girl. I think that it ought to be national, not just in a few States.

And so I hope the Congress, and maybe the conference, will reconsider that, even though even the Senate wouldn't pass that. They ought to take a look at this now, because clearly the adults bear the primary responsibility here. And people would think twice before just leaving a gun hanging around the house that a kid could walk off with if that were the case.

Gun Control Legislation

Mr. Rather. Mr. President, there are so many questions about this issue that run so deep in the American character, as well as our history. With, as you've mentioned, at least 200 millions guns out there, what about the argument that says, listen, there's really no chance that we're going to have meaningful gun control in this country unless you go out and get those guns back, and that's simply not practical?

The President. Well, I think, first of all, you never want to make the perfect the enemy of the good. Look how much good

the Brady bill has done. It's kept a half million felons, fugitives, and stalkers from getting handguns. And that's one of the reasons that the murder rate is at a 30-year low. So it won't solve all the problems, but it will solve some.

Secondly, especially if we could license people when they come in to buy handguns, we could then couple that with a very aggressive gun buy-back program. Keep in mind, yes, there are more than 200 million guns out there, but a lot of them are in the hands of collectors and not regularly in use. What we need to do is to get these cheap guns off the streets, and with an aggressive gun buy-back program we could do that. Just with the few million dollars we spend on it every year, we get a huge number of guns, offering about \$50 a gun.

So I would also like to see that program expanded. If you could get a lot of the older guns that are just out there floating loose off the street, if you could license the handgun owners, if you could have child safety locks, and then if we could proceed with this safe-gun technology so that in the future all the guns that were sold could only be fired by the adults who are their rightful owner, I think you'd go a long, long way toward making this a much, much safer country.

And it wouldn't in any way infringe on the rights of hunters and sport shooters, except to ask them to do what the rest of us do when we go through airport metal detectors or get driver's licenses. We undergo a little bit of inconvenience so that society as a whole would be a lot safer. And I think we have neglected this far too long.

As I said, there's not enough urgency in the Congress. You've got a dozen kids a day still getting shot to death out there. And this bill has been up there for 8 months. So this is one place where I think the United States Congress is completely out of touch with the American people, largely because of the genuine fear people have of the organized NRA interest back in their district. And they just no longer reflect the views of the majority of the people.

I had a woman tell me yesterday when I was touring a high-tech facility in northern Virginia that her husband was a Republican and an avid hunter, who strongly supported

these initiatives. And I think that's where the American people are. It's time for Congress to get in step with the American people and take these actions that will make our children safer.

Gun Control and Politics

Mr. Rather. Is it, or is it not, your contention, Mr. President, the basic problem has been the Republican-led Congress?

The President. Oh, absolutely. Now, we have some Democrats who live in rural districts where there are a lot of hunters and where they're afraid of this because when I passed the assault weapons ban and the Brady bill, back in '93 and '94, there's no question that the NRA beat about a dozen of our Members. There's no question they did. These people who voted with us to make our streets safer and save lives gave up their seats in Congress.

But public opinion has shifted a lot since then. And this is primarily a problem of the leadership in the Republican Congress being unwilling to part from the NRA. And I hope that they will do it now, because I think a lot of their Members want to. And almost all these Members of Congress could vote for this legislation and not be threatened at all, and they need to do that.

Mr. Rather. When I talk to the Republican leadership in Congress, they—and I will say, somewhat gleefully—say, “Look, there are at least 60 Democrats in the House who, no way, no how, are going to vote for any additional gun control legislation.”

The President. Well, that leaves us with about 140 on our side, which means they only have to produce 80 for us to have a majority. So they ought to do that. There's 80 Republicans who come from suburban districts where their constituents strongly support this and where they would not be defeated by the NRA if they went with us.

National Rifle Association

Mr. Rather. You've mentioned the NRA several times. Everybody knows the National Rifle Association pours a lot of money into a lot of campaigns to beat just this kind of legislation that you have proposed. But is it, or is it not, reality that what you have are tens of millions of Americans who own guns

and whatever their party affiliation, however they feel about you, are just adamant about not controlling guns any further, and that's the real problem?

The President. Well, it is, but most of them—a lot of gun owners—keep in mind, I'm convinced a majority of hunters and sport shooters, once they understand that these regulations do not in any way, shape, or form, impact their ability to conduct their lawful affairs, will support what amounts to a minor inconvenience—doing a background check at a gun show, for example, having a child safety lock on a handgun—to save lives.

And I'll say again, I know public opinion has changed. In New Hampshire, we lost a Democratic Congressman who voted for the assault weapons ban and the Brady bill. He lost his job in '94. And I went up there in '96 and met with a bunch of people who were hunters and sportsmen, and I said, "Now, the NRA told you we were going to take your guns away and inconvenience you." And I said, "If you missed a day in a deer season, I want you to vote against me, too. But if you didn't, they didn't tell you the truth, and you need to stick with us." And we won, and won handily there.

So I think people are changing as they understand this is simply commonsense safety measures, and as a society, we all undergo minor inconveniences so that our children can grow up safe. And it's ridiculous—the United States is the only country in the world that would allow this kind of, I believe, recklessness with the public interest. Nobody else does it, and that's why we have the highest murder rate and the highest accidental gun death rate of children, because we don't take these commonsense measures.

I think we ought to make this a safer country. And we can do it, I'll say again, without interfering with people's right to hunting and sport shooting.

Meeting With Congressional Leaders

Mr. Rather. Mr. President, I know you have a meeting to go to. You've been very generous with your time. A last question. So many people, when I talk to them, they say, "Look, it's fine for the President to talk this way, but he's going to see rocks grow and water run uphill before he sees any real gun

control legislation." Now, you've made it clear you don't believe that. What can you do to move this along? Can you call the Members of Congress to the White House for a special meeting to compromise? What can you do?

Mr. President. Yes. Well, I'm going to bring down the leaders of the House and the Senate, the Republicans and Democrats, who are in charge of this bill in the conference. The House and the Senate version are in a conference. They're supposed to come up with a unified bill and let the House and Senate vote on it. And I don't have any doubt if they report out a good bill, it will pass. And I'm going to do everything I can to pass it.

I don't believe that. They said—once they said we'd see water run uphill before we had Brady background checks. And then before we banned assault weapons. And then before we banned these large-capacity ammunition clips. We did all that, but we left some loopholes in the law that we ought to close. We ought to require child safety locks. We ought to invest in safe-gun technology. And we ought to license handgun owners.

You know, every significant reform in a controversial area is considered to be impossible when you start. But you just start, and you keep working, and you keep working, and you keep working, and eventually it happens.

Mr. Rather. Mr. President, thank you. I'd love to come by sometime and talk to you about Colombia and China and Taiwan. But I appreciate you taking time today to do this.

Thank you very much.

Mr. President. Thank you very much, Dan.

Mr. Rather. Mr. President, I really appreciate you taking time to do this. Great. Thanks a lot. Tell the First Lady hello for us.

Mr. President. I'll do it.

NOTE: The interview was taped at approximately 4:06 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room for later broadcast and was embargoed by the Office of the Press Secretary until 6:30 p.m. In his remarks, the President referred to Kayla Rolland, who was shot and mortally wounded by a 6-year-old classmate in Mount Morris Township, MI. A tape was not

available for verification of the content of this interview.

**Remarks to the Aspen Institute in
San Jose, California**
March 3, 2000

Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you very much, Eric. I appreciate your kind remarks, except I don't want you telling anybody that. [*Laughter*]

I'm delighted to be here with my friend Reed Hundt, our former FCC Chairman. And President Johnson, thank you for having us here at the Aspen Institute. Senator Feinstein, thank you for coming out with me this morning, along with Congresswoman Tauscher. And I thank Representative Eshoo for coming and Representative Lofgren for welcoming us to her district.

Governor Leavitt, thank you for being here. Governor Leavitt is the leader of the Governors this year. He just spent 3 days with me in Washington. I thought he would find something else to do. If he spends any more time with me, they'll run him out of the Republican Party. [*Laughter*] However, being a Baptist, not a Mormon, I believe in deathbed conversions. You're always welcome over here. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Mayor Gonzalez for welcoming us. And I thank Mayor Menino for being here, and our former Governors, Roy Romer and Gaston Caperton and former Mayor Schmoke from Baltimore. And I thank Bill Kennard, our present FCC Chair, for coming out with me today.

Gun Control Legislation

I do want to talk a little bit about the meaning of this 50th anniversary of the Aspen Institute, but because this is my only opportunity to speak to the American people through the press today, there was a late-developing event last night in the Congress I'd like to comment on, related to the gun violence and what our national response should be in the wake of the tragic shootings this week.

Over the last couple of days, I have once again asked Congress to meet and pass commonsense gun safety legislation that they've been sitting on for 8 months. Let me men-

tion, in the aftermath of the Columbine shootings, I asked the Congress to pass legislation that would provide for child trigger locks on all guns, close the loophole in the Brady law which requires background checks for guns bought at gun shops but not at gun shows or urban flea markets, and ban the importation of large capacity ammunition clips, which are now illegal under the assault weapons ban that Senator Feinstein gave us, if they're domestic. And I asked for also a national law on adult supervision responsibility if children were recklessly allowed to get guns, and that's, of course, exactly what happened in the case, the tragic case in Michigan.

Well, anyway, 8 months ago the House passed a version and the Senate passed a version. And from my point of view, the Senate bill was much better; it was much stronger, and it passed when the Vice President cast the tie-breaking vote. But for 8 months there's been no action on this legislation, so I asked for it.

Well, last night, Senator Boxer offered a nonbinding resolution that would put the Senate on record as saying we need to pass commonsense gun safety legislation now. And after all we went through this week, the resolution failed on a 49-49 tie, with 100 percent of the Democratic Senators and 10 percent of the Republican Senators voting for it, and 90 percent of the Republican Senators voted against it.

Now, this is not a partisan issue, I don't believe, anywhere but Washington, DC. Again, it's a great credit—you've got to give credit where credit is due—it's a great credit to the power of the NRA in Washington. Just this morning they said they were going to launch a \$20 million campaign to target Members of Congress who do this kind of thing, try to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children.

And right now they're running ads that treat the possibility that we could have technology to develop smart guns—that is, guns that could only be fired by their owners—as some sort of a joke. Well, I don't think it's very funny when a 6-year-old can pick up a gun and go shoot another 6-year-old, and a child safety lock would have prevented

it; smart gun technology would have prevented it. We know the Brady background check law has kept half a million felons, fugitives, and stalkers from getting guns, and I think that we ought to close the loophole that allows a lot of people to buy at these gun shows and not do the background checks. They work.

And I believe, and I know Senator Feinstein believes, that we ought to ask handgun owners to have a license, the way we ask drivers to do.

But the main thing I want to talk about now is there is a practical bill before the Congress which would deal with the fact that we're losing 12 kids a day to gun violence. And in addition to the intentional deaths, the accidental death rates of children under 15 by guns is 9 times higher in the United States than in the next 24 biggest industrial countries combined.

So I ask you—I know I didn't come here to talk about this, and I know the American people may think I'm a broken record about it, but I think the older you get—you said something about when you get to 50 you begin to—whatever you said about being 50, I'm not so sure. [Laughter] The Vice President once gave me a birthday present that said that the Cherokees believed that people didn't achieve full maturity until they were 51. All I know is that if you've ever had a child, everything else seems small by comparison, including the most wonderful job in the world. And I think this is crazy what we're doing.

I come from a State where half the people have a hunting and fishing license. I fired my first .22 when I was 10, 11, 12 years old. This has nothing to do with any of this. We are a big, complex society, and we can save more of our children. We've got a 30-year low in the murder rate, 30-year low in the gun death rate, but we can make this the safest big country in the world, and we can do it without undermining the personal liberties of other people. So I hope you'll forgive me, but I wanted to say that, get that off my chest, and ask them to send me the bill in the next few days.

Privacy on the Internet and the Digital Divide

Now, I think it was interesting—I was thinking about what things were like when the Aspen Institute started 50 years ago. The first conference took place as scientists were close to giving us our first glimpse of the double helix, and there was a revolution in communications technology: color television. From that day to this, the Aspen Institute has had a proud tradition of informed and enlightened dialog on emerging national and global issues.

And of course, I look out on this audience, and some of you were referred to by me or by previous speakers, that all of you are people on the front lines of change, all of you are people who care very much about our future, all of you are people who have a greater grasp of what is going on than most people have time to gain, given their own lives and responsibilities. And that's why it's important that you gather and think about these things.

There is no question that one of the reasons that—and perhaps the primary reason this has been both the longest and the strongest economic expansion in history is because of the explosion of technology. The high-tech companies alone account for only 8 percent of our employment, but they've been 30 percent of our growth. And perhaps even more profound, the technological innovations that are the core business of many of the companies represented in this room, and certainly in this area, are rippling through the whole rest of the economy, adding to the overall productivity of the American economy in ways that frankly have not been measurable.

I'll just give you one example. In 1992, after the election, when I gathered our economic team around the table at the Governor's Mansion at home in Arkansas, I asked these economists, many of whom were young and vigorous people, I said, "Now, how low can we get the unemployment rate before inflation sets in, the Fed will have to raise interest rates, and we'll be back in the tack again? How low can it go?"

And a couple of them said 6 percent. A couple of them said 5.5 percent. They were

universal in their belief that if we ever got the unemployment rate down to 5 percent and it stayed there, we'd have raging inflation, and we'd have to break it, and it would be the end of the recovery. And these were people, obviously, that had a—they were members, by and large, of my party; they shared my political philosophy, though they had a philosophical predisposition toward believing that low unemployment was a very good thing however it was achieved. Yet, they thought that.

Why is that? Because economists had no tools, as recently as 1992, to measure the impact of technology on this economy—something that Governor Romer's son was pointing out to us before, I think before anybody else, at least that I know of in the country—had no tools to appreciate what the impact on productivity would be and how it would rifle through the economy and lift the whole thing in a way that would enable us to have 4 percent unemployment for a sustained period of time. We had the new unemployment figures come out today. We had 4.1 percent, and we're almost bumping 21 million new jobs now, in the last 7 years.

And the biggest concern we've had about inflation is the rising oil prices, which is part of the old economy, if you will, and something that has to be worked out a different way. But it's very interesting. And let me give you an example of why we've had a hard time understanding what the potential of the economy is.

We, the people who do this work, started to count software investment as a part of GDP only in October of 1999. It's amazing. Think about this. We began counting retail sales as part of GDP in 1947. And we've done it about the same way ever since. Yesterday we got a new benchmark for the new economy when the Department of Commerce yesterday released its first-ever quarterly report on E-commerce, telling us the Internet sales interesting fourth quarter of last year, the holiday season, were \$5.3 billion—about \$65 of those attributable to the President. [Laughter]

Now, that was more than twice the previous year. But many believe that E-commerce will climb to \$1.3 trillion—trillion—a year within just the next 3 years. When

I became President in 1993, there were 50 sites on the World Wide Web. Today, there are more than 10 million. I visited a company involved in the web last week in northern Virginia, UUNET. They did their first contract in 1988; by 1994, they had 40 employees. They have 8,000 now.

So we now know that we have a new and different economy. We now are beginning to figure out, a, how to measure it and, b, how to assess where tomorrow's growth will come from. I also think it's very important that we assess precisely what the role of Government should and should not be. And I want to commend Governor Leavitt here for taking on the completely thankless task of trying to figure out how Internet sales should be dealt with in the taxation systems of State and local government. You talk about a stone-dead loser. [Laughter] It is a totally thankless—I admire him for many reasons, but shouldering this burden may be the most compelling example that he really has a good heart and willingness to do what has to be done.

But if you think about it, how this is managed is an example of what will be a whole new set of questions about what the role of Government should be. And they can't all be answered now because things are developing too fast. And let me just suggest that I think that our guideposts ought to be that we should have a Government that tries its best to establish the conditions and then to give individual Americans the tools necessary to make the most of this emerging economy.

Vice President Gore and I have really worked hard on that. We negotiated historic trade agreements on information technology, to open markets, establishing conditions. We tried to bring our export control policies up to date and still be sensitive to what our national security people say. That's the framework, the conditions. Maybe one of the most important things we did was to fight for the right kind of comprehensive telecommunications reform in the first overhaul of that bill in 60 years. And we worked very hard in the White House to make sure that it was a reform that was oriented toward competition, toward giving new firms a chance to enter new markets and entrepreneurs a chance to really create wealth and jobs out of their ideas.

And I think it's clear to me now, looking back, that the fights we waged to try to be pro-competitive, pro-entrepreneur, in that rather herculean legislative battle, had even more positive impacts than I had imagined they would.

Those are the conditions. What about the tools, the E-rate, which the FCC did? And I want to thank both our former and our present Chairman of the FCC for their support of this. We got discounted Internet rates for schools and libraries, which increased the percentage of our school classrooms connected to the Internet from 3 percent in 1994, when the Vice President and I did our first NetDay in San Francisco, to 63 percent in 1999. And we're up to over 90 percent of the schools have at least one connection. And we'll soon be at a point where the only schools that don't have at least one connection will be schools that are literally too old and decrepit to be wired, which is a problem for another day. But we have a lot of our—urban school systems have school buildings with an average age of 65 or 70 years of the school buildings, and it's a very difficult problem.

But we're on our way to universal student access because of the E-rates. Otherwise, without the E-rate, a lot of these schools could never have afforded to hook up, and a lot of these small libraries in rural areas could never have afforded to hook up.

We've also worked to accelerate the Federal investment in research and development and to conditions to help you extend it by an extension of the research and experimentation tax credit and by expanding our national science and technology budget every year. After all, Government-funded research helped to spark everything from the Internet to communication satellites.

This year we have proposed an increase of \$600 million in information technology research and almost \$500 million for a major new initiative in nanotechnology, the ability to manipulate matter at the atomic and molecular level, something that will, in my view, give you a whole new generation of revolutions in this remarkable area.

Now, we only know some of the likely developments as a result of this R&D. We know it is highly likely that soon we'll have tech-

nology that will put all the contents in the Library of Congress in a device the size of a sugar cube and find and treat cancerous tumors when they're just a few cells in size so that you won't have to have the ravages of side effects of cancer treatment, and the effectiveness of the treatment will be far greater than it is today. And those are only two things. There are many other things. If this nanotechnology business really works, and we can figure out how to, in effect, use that to develop information storage, then what will happen within a reasonably few years is literally beyond the limits of my poor imagination.

So I will say again—but we do know this; we know that whatever happens, the Government's role, in my judgment, should be to try to establish the conditions in which good people, working hard, will be rewarded in a way that will be positive for society as a whole and then to give people the tools to make sure that everybody has a chance, no matter where they start in life. That, I think, to me, will in all probability be the key responsibilities of Government for quite a long while to come.

And if they are well-fulfilled, whether it's in maintaining fiscal responsibility and paying down the debt so that there is more money available for investment capital to start all these new firms and give life to all these new ideas or investing more in education and in what works and in giving States like California that have pioneered charter schools the right to have more and the support they need to have more, or giving every kid who is in a tough neighborhood the right to an after-school or a summer school program—those things will have to be done so that we have both the conditions and the tools consistent with a society that is both successful and genuinely egalitarian.

Now, I know that the Forum on Communications and Society is also working hard to be a catalyst for change and for better and broader use of technology. Of all the areas where we might work together, I would suggest that there are two which are absolutely vital to keep the information economy and all America growing strong. The first is Internet security and privacy, and the second is closing the digital divide. The first, from our

point of view, relates to conditions; the second relates to giving all Americans the tools they need to make the most of their own lives in this remarkable time.

We know we have to keep cyberspace open and free because it sparks creativity and innovation, because its infinite networks can do so much to bring us together. But we also know that cyberspace must be a community of shared responsibilities and common values.

Last month I met with high-tech leaders to talk about making our networks more secure and resilient. They urged the Federal Government to do something we have committed to do, to lead by example, to take that responsibility very seriously. We have formed a Government-industry partnership for security. I've requested more than \$2 billion from Congress to fund cybersecurity initiatives and research.

Today I'm ordering a review of every Federal agency to determine our vulnerability to denial-of-service attacks and to make sure that Federal computers cannot be used by outsiders to attack others. They will be reporting back to my Chief of Staff, John Podesta, so that we can prepare a strong response. And I hope industry will follow that example.

We must also do more to uphold Americans' high expectations that their right to privacy will be protected online. That includes making sure that as Government works to protect our citizens in cyberspace, it does not infringe on our civil liberties. We must not undermine freedom in the name of freedom.

Our administration has encouraged Internet firms to work together to raise privacy standards. The response has been good. The share of commercial websites with privacy policies went from 15 percent to 66 percent in just one year. That's a very impressive record.

But the American people know it's still not enough. Some subjects are so sensitive, I believe they should have legal protection: our medical records, our financial records, any interactions with our children online. Business must find ways to give Americans the confidence they expect in these and other privacy concerns. So today I think we must all ask ourselves, and everyone in this area,

do you have privacy policies you can be proud of? Do you have privacy policies you would be glad to have reported in the media? I hope that all of you will work with us and work together among ourselves to maximize the possibilities of an open Internet by securing Americans' fundamental right to privacy.

I can tell you that I spend—you know, one of the things I have tried to do as the President is to avoid becoming isolated from the concerns of ordinary citizens, and among other things, I have a special zip code for old-fashioned mail at the White House that I gave to a bunch of people that I grew up with who are just citizens in all walks of life. And for 7 years now, they've written me about what people were mad at me about. [Laughter] They've written me when people thought I made a mistake. They've written me when they thought the Government was totally irrelevant to their lives because they were concerned about other things.

And I also spend a lot of time just talking to people. You know, when I go places, very often I'll stop and just go down and have an unscheduled stop and get out and shake hands with people and ask them what's on their mind. People are worried about this. This is a big deal to people. You know, ordinary folks, even people who aren't online yet, are very excited about the prospects of this age so many of you have done so much to create. But they are really concerned about this. They are afraid they will have no place to hide.

And so I would argue again that the continuing success of this phenomenal enterprise, which has no parallel in history, requires us to seriously take into account the core of what makes America a unique place, that freedom requires a certain space of privacy.

Now, I also would say, to go to my second condition—that's about the conditions; this is about the tools—I think business must work with us to make sure that we close the faultline between those who have access to computers and to the Internet and those who do not. It has now become known as the digital divide.

This spring I will take another one of my new markets tours designed to convince the private sector that places in America which

have still not fully participated in our economy are great new markets. The Indian reservations, the rural areas, the inner-city neighborhoods are opportunities for us, and we know the only way we can fully maximize them is to bring the information age to every family in every community, yes, first to make sure all our schools have the technology and then that all our teachers know how to maximize it and use it but also to make sure that adults have access, as well.

I want to congratulate Mayor Menino on what Boston has done, opening more than 80 community technology centers in underserved areas to serve adults, while bringing thousands of computers into schools and setting up training and job training programs with private sector partners. We should do this all over the country. I've asked Congress for tax incentives for companies that donate computers for technology training for every single new teacher in this country, and for funding to establish 1,000 community technology centers so that adults can also have access to the information economy.

I've proposed a pilot project with industry to bring computers and the Internet to low income families, like Oakland's ClickStart or the program started by Governor King of Maine yesterday, where he's really going to try to get a laptop into the home of every family. It's an amazing thing. Let me say, he's going to do it. They will start with the seventh graders. Let me explain what the program is in Maine, if you didn't see it. They're going to start by giving every seventh grader a laptop, but the way they're going to do it is to make sure that the seventh grader will also be able to take the computer home and to try to involve the parents in it. And that, I think, is a remarkably good thing.

I never will forget visiting a program in northern New Jersey that Lucent did with a school district there, where most of the kids were first-generation Americans, and their parents were immigrants whose primary language was not English. And because they were just picking one school district, they could make sure that there were computers in the home, as well. So they got all these people who would never dream of using a

abled them to E-mail the teachers, E-mail the principal, and they had a dramatic drop in the school dropout rate and a dramatic increase in the student performance rate because of the connections between the two.

So it will be interesting to follow how the Maine program works out. I want to give credit where credit is due. Governor Caperton, when he was Governor of West Virginia, was the first Governor in the country to virtually computerize all of the elementary schools in his State and give all of his kids access to this kind of technology, and most of us were just trying to follow in the wake here. But this is very exciting stuff.

But again I will say to you, I don't think education is enough here. We have a chance to bring the benefits of enterprise to areas that have been left behind. We've got Indian reservations in this country where the unemployment rate is 70 percent. The unemployment rate in this Nation is 4.1 percent today. We have lots and lots of urban neighborhoods and rural areas where unemployment is still in double digits, where people want to work and can be trained. And a part of making people, especially those who are physically isolated—because they're in rural areas or distant Indian reservations or physically isolated in cities because they don't have cars to get around—a part of bringing them into this economy is using technology to bridge the distances, not only between what they know and what skills they have but actually where they are.

So I think this is a big deal and, as I said in the State of the Union Address, if we don't do this now when we've got the strongest economy in our lifetime, when will we ever get around to it? We actually have a chance to let everybody ride along with the American economy. Doubtless it will slow down some day; doubtless we'll have another recession someday. But at least people ought to have a chance to take the elevator up since they get to stay on the ground floor when it's down. And we'll never have a better chance than we have now to do this.

So, in closing, let me just say, if I could make one request of every technology whiz in this room, it would be this: Your skills and your ideas and the companies that you have created have the potential for so much good. But no sector of the economy can be totally isolated from the health of the overall society. So this is a case where what is morally right and what is economically intelligent coincide. We have to think about how the networks that you dominate can close the gaps that divide us, light the darkness that clouds us, and spread the freedom that lets each of us have the chance to live our dreams.

If we do it right, if we can make every American technologically literate, if we can make our Government wise not only in its own use of technology but in setting those conditions and giving those tools, if we keep building the right kind of information economy, which respects privacy and has security but is an entrepreneur's dream, then what we have achieved in the last 7 years will be just a small prolog of what will occur in the years ahead.

But I'm absolutely convinced we'll do it only if we're committed to doing it together, if we believe everyone counts, if we believe everyone should have a chance, if we believe everyone has a role to play, and if we believe we all do better when we help each other. That's a pretty old-fashioned statement to end a new economy speech on, but it's the very best I can do.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:08 a.m. in the Silicon Valley Conference Center at Novell Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Eric Schmidt, chief executive officer, Novell; Elmer W. Johnson, president, Aspen Institute; Gov. Michael O. Leavitt of Utah; Mayor Ron Gonzales of San Jose; Mayor Thomas M. Menino of Boston, MA; former Governors Roy Romer of Colorado and Gaston Caperton of West Virginia; former Mayor Kurt Schmoke of Baltimore, MD; Paul M. Romer, professor of economics, Stanford Graduate School of Business, and Gov. Angus S. King, Jr., of Maine.

Memorandum on Action by Federal Agencies To Safeguard Against Internet Attacks

March 3, 2000

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Action by Federal Agencies to Safeguard Against Internet Attacks

America and the world have benefited tremendously from the amazing advances we have seen with the Internet and computer technology. But with every new technological advance there are new challenges, and we must meet them—both Government and the private sector—in partnership.

Following recent Internet disruptions, I met with experts and leaders of the information technology industry so we could work together to maximize the promise of the Internet, while minimizing the risks. These Internet disruptions highlight how important computer networks have become to our daily lives; and how vulnerabilities can create risks for all—including the Federal Government.

Accordingly, I ask that each Cabinet Secretary and agency head renew their efforts to safeguard their department or agency's computer systems against denial-of-service attacks on the Internet. Within legal and administrative limits, attention should also be paid to contractors providing services. The Federal Computer Incident Response Center (FEDCirc) and the National Infrastructure Protection Center (NIPC) have available software tools to assist you in these efforts.

I have asked my Chief of Staff, John Podesta, to coordinate a review of Federal Government vulnerabilities in this regard and to report back to me by April 1.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

February 28

The President announced his intention to nominate Daniel Marcus to be Associate Attorney General at the Department of Justice.

The President announced his intention to nominate Thomas P. Furey to be Ambassador to Nepal.

The President announced his intention to appoint Katherine Slick as a member of the Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation.

The President declared a major disaster in Virginia and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a severe winter storm on January 25–30.

The President declared a major disaster in West Virginia and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by flooding, severe storms, and landslides beginning on February 18 and continuing.

The President declared a major disaster in Kentucky and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding on February 18 and continuing.

February 29

In the morning, the President traveled to West Palm Beach, FL, and in the evening, he traveled to Miami. Later, the President returned to Washington, DC.

March 1

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Ashburn, VA, where he toured the UUNET Network Operations Center. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Carlos Pascual to be Ambassador to Ukraine.

The President announced his intention to nominate James V. Aidala to be Assistant Administrator for Prevention, Pesticides, and

Toxic Substances at the Environmental Protection Agency.

March 2

The President announced his intention to appoint Jacqueline Mary Grebmeier as a member of the Arctic Research Commission.

March 3

The President announced the appointment of Guillermo Linares as Chair of the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted February 28

Nicholas G. Garaufis
of New York, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of New York, vice Charles P. Sifton, retired.

Gerard E. Lynch
of New York, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of New York, vice John E. Sprizzo, retired.

I. Daniel Marcus
of Maryland, to be Associate Attorney General, vice Raymond C. Fisher.

Submitted March 2

Sarah McCracken Fox,
of New York, to be a member of the National Labor Relations Board for the term of 5 years expiring December 16, 2004, to which position she was appointed during the recess of the Senate from November 19, 1999, to January 24, 2000.

Carlos Pascual,
of the District of Columbia, a career member
of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Min-
ister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraor-
dinary and Plenipotentiary of the United
States of America to Ukraine.

Bonnie J. Campbell,
of Iowa, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the
Eighth Circuit, vice George G. Fagg, retired.

Thomas P. Furey,
of Oregon, a career member of the Senior
Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor,
to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Pleni-
potentiary of the United States of America
to the Kingdom of Nepal.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office
of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as
items nor covered by entries in the Digest of
Other White House Announcements.

Released February 28

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Sec-
retary Joe Lockhart

Statement by the Press Secretary: Meeting
with His Excellency Ernesto Zedillo, Presi-
dent of Mexico

Announcement of nominations for U.S. Dis-
trict Judges for the Southern District and the
Eastern District of New York

Released February 29

Transcript of remarks to the pool by Deputy
Assistant to the President for Health Policy
Chris Jennings and Assistant to the President
for Domestic Policy Bruce Reed on Medi-
care and tobacco

Released March 1

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Sec-
retary Joe Lockhart

Statement by the Press Secretary: Annual
Presidential Certifications for Major Drug
Producing and Transit Countries

Fact sheet: Overview of Annual Presidential
Certification of Major Drug Producing and
Transit Countries

Released March 2

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Sec-
retary Joe Lockhart

Announcement of nomination for U.S. Court
of Appeals Judge for the Eighth Circuit

Acts Approved by the President

NOTE: No acts approved by the President were
received by the Office of the Federal Register
during the period covered by this issue.